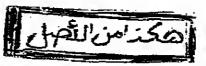
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THE AWARD-WINNING INDEPENDENT: EDITOR OF THE YEAR, CORRESPONDENT OF THE YEAR

THE INDEPENDENT

YOUR THREE SECTION PAPER: 26-PAGE NEWS SECTION PLUS 12-PAGE BUSINESS SUPPLEMENT PLUS 18-PAGE BROADSHEET REVIEW

Je ne regrette rien... perhaps I have been a little careless'

- Edith Cresson, French Commissioner

'I note with considerable satisfaction that I am whiter than white'

- Jacques Santer, EC President

'It's a disaster... and it requires ruthless determination to deal with'

- Sir Leon Brittan, EC vice-president

'The President of the Commission should leave as soon as possible

- Tony Blair, British Prime Minister

Santer must go now – Blair

TONY BLAIR called last night BY STEPHEN CASTLE for Jacques Santer to pay the and ANDREW GRICE price for the fraud and mismanagement exposed by the official inquiry into the European Commission by standing down immediately as President.

After an unrepentant Mr Santer told a Brussels press conference he was "whiter than white", Mr Blair told the Commons that the Commission's response to Monday's highly critical report had been "wholly inadequate".

In an emergency statement on the biggest crisis in the EU's history, the Prime Minister said: "The President of the Commission should leave as . Street called the "jobs-for-thesoon as reasonably and practi- boys culture" in Brussels. cally possible."

During two hours of talks in Downing Street last night, Mr Blair urged Gerhard Schröder, the German Chancellor and holder of the European Union's rotating presidency, to seek fast-track agreement on a successor to Mr Santer at a sum-

Prodi to succeed -page 2

sacking page 3 ■ Blair statement to

Leading article. Steve Richards. - Monitor, Review, page 3

mit of EU leaders in Berlin next week But Mr Schröder warned that it could take longer to find an acceptable candidate.

The summit, which is due to agree a new EU funding system and reform the common agricultural policy, will now be overshadowed by the fiasco in

Mr Blair believes the priority is to remove Mr Santer and install a successor who can drive through reforms to the EU. He opposes the idea of a caretaker president - such as Sir Leon Brittan, the Commission Vice-President - running the Commission until January, when Mr Santer's five-year term comes to an end.

Mr Blair said: "The new president must be a political heavyweight, capably of providing leadership and authority to the Commission." Downing Street refused to say whom Mr Blair was backing for the post, its own merits."

but be has publicly endorsed Romano Prodi, a former prime minister of Italy.

Privately, pro-EU British ministers fear the Brussels fiasco will harden British public opinion against the EU and joining the single currency.

But Mr Blair went on the offensive yesterday, presenting a paper to Mr Schröder proposing "root and branch reform" to the way the Commission operates, including a crackdown on fraud, financial mismanagement and what Downing

One minister said: "The door is now open to radical reform in Europe. It is an argument we can win if we are bold enough. Reform is the only way the EU can recover its credibility."

Earlier, in Brussels, Mr Schröder said he wanted "to take a decision rapidly", and hinted that Mr Santer's role as caretaker president will be-

That followed an angry press conference at which Mr Santer declared himself to be "whiter conclusions of the report as "unbalanced". Mr Santer and several fellow commissioners were furious about the final chapter to the 144-page document which accused them of failing to accept political responsibility for the culture of corruption. He said the conclusions were "totally unjustified" and "shameful"

"I cannot accept this affirmation that the Commission has been responsible for fraud, irregularities and mismanage ment," he said

Edith Cresson, the commissioner most seriously criticised, volunteered: "Perhaps I have been a little careless."

Colleagues and adversaries moved quickly to slap down Mr Santer. The President of the European Parliament, Jose Maria Gil-Robles, backed the inquiry findings and demanded a quick solution to the crisis. He said: "No one in our countries could imagine that a government which stands down because it doesn't have parliamentary confidence could stay in place for another nine months until. another government is elected."

Even Sir Leon said: "I don't think this is the time to carp at the content or cavil at the wording of the report. It stands on

IT WAS the Burgermeister's BY RUPERT CORNWELL

last stand, a final puffing of the petty functionary's chest, a valedictory outpouring of righteous indignation that anyone should have the impertinence to suggest that he might have

unmitigated disaster. When Jacques Santer took the rostrum in Brussels yesterday, on the morning after the report of the night before, a touch of contrition from the Commission's President might

yet have earned forgiveness. Not, however, after a performance that gave the word "im-

"I reject the conclusions of the report," he declared for failed in his job. It was also an openers. "The picture is distorted ... wholly unjustified." It was "a slur" on the reputation of 19,000 toiling and honest Eurocrats. And then the most breathtaking assertion of all, that the independent ex-

perts had found his own performance to be "whiter than

Jacques Santer, who rejected the highly critical report into the European Commission as 'wholly inadequate' and declared himself 'whiter than white'

The last stand of the Burgermeister

A curious proposition, to put it mildly, given how the report singled out Mr Santer in person for failing to take a "meaningful interest" in the Commission's Security Office,

which had been permitted to turn into "a state within state" It was the soluttering outrage of a mayor of a middlesized city caught nanping after one decent lunch too many -

which in a sense exactly describes the previous job expeone-time Prime Minister of the 350,000 good citizens of the little state of Luxembourg.

That Mr Santer was promoted so greatly beyond his station is to the credit of our own former prime minister John Major, who out of pique in 1994 vetoed the widely favoured candidacy of the Belgian Prime Minister, Jean-Luc

The current Prime Minister yesterday was not so supportive. "I will be blunt," said Mr

"We cannot have the next president decided in the same way as the last, debating the narrow interests of one country or another.

"The top jobs, not just in the Commission, but throughout the European institutions, should go to the top people Merit and merit alone should decide," he said.



INSIDE THIS SECTION

ry Nelson killing

Heart surgeons inquiry Care failures occurred at every level, first day was told ne P4

RUC asked Kent police to

investigate solicitor's death

Eton pupils played bizarre fainting game, hearing told

Rail crash death toli

Foreign P13 Refugees flee dvil war Thirteen died when a train Thousands of refugees from and truck collided in Illinois Congo flooded into Zambia

Foreign P13

Kosovo deal hitch

KLA splinter group has

"black hole" due to losses denounced peace agreement **Business P16**

England call up Catt England have recalled the fly-half Mike Catt

£400m bill for Airbus

Airbus Industrie has a £400m

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Steve Richards Can anyone control the monster of Europe Comment Pa

Ken Livingstone Labour's Scottish campaign is starting to sound Old

You ask the questions Elleen Drewery, faith healer, answers readers' queries Features P8

Prêt in Paris Susannah Frankel on the eady to wear collections





Sleep your way to the top.

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BRITISH AIRWAYS

The world's favourite airline

Europe is beheaded after nig

Prodi is the front-runner for presidency

ROMANO PRODL the former By STEPHEN CASTLE Italian prime minister, and in Brussels Javier Solana, Nato's secretary-general, emerged as early favourites to succeed Jacques Santer as European Commis-

successor next week, be issued a strong defence of his tenure of office, and one which currency. united MEPs in disbelief.

As jockeying for key posts Solana's prospects depend on winning the support of the Maria Aznar. The twn men come from rival parties and personal relations between them are not close.

Massimo D'Alema, his successor as Prime Minister.

Germany's Defence Minister, while nutside possibilities include Wim Kok and Antonio Guterres, the Dutch and Portuguese Prime Ministers. Both are still in office and might find it difficult to extract themselves from their present posts.

Britain, for a quick resolution of the crisis, the timetable for the replacement of the Santer

There is speculation that a temporary candidate may take end of December. over from Mr Santer and would then see the Commission are includes Edith Cresson, through to the end of the year. former French prime minister the commissioner for industri-

That might leave the way open for senior figures such as Hans van den Broek, foreign affairs commissioner, or Sir Leon Brit-As European leaders came tan, Commission vice-presiunder pressure to choose his dent, although his prospects may suffer from the fact Britain is not a member of the single

It is more likely a new president will be selected after an began, it emerged that Mr agreement by all 15 EU leaders, and that he or she will get a six-month mandate at first. Spanish Prime Minister, Jose with the expectation of a fiveyear term starting in 2000. That could leave the way

open for at least some of the current commissioners to stay Mr Prodi has the backing of on until the end of the year. Germany indicated yesterday that it wishes to see the present The field of candidates to regime staying in place as caretake over from Mr Santer also takers until the June Euroincludes Rudolf Scharping, pean elections. But that was opposed by the European Parliament, as MEPs are convinced the administration must be removed before they have to face the voters. Whatever happens, the

shape of the new Commission will be very different, and only Despite pressure from sev- a minority of those now in office and commissioner for research al affairs, eral countries, including are likely to return to Brussels. Neil Kinnock, the British transport commissioner, received the Government's backing for commission remains unclear. a second term of office. Sir Leon is due to step down at the

The list of those who face the



Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (right), current EU president, and Tony Blair at Downing Street yesterday. Mr Schröder appealed for calm on the EU AFP

and education, who was at the centre of the crisis; the Commission vice-president Manuel Marin, who was planning to step down; Anita Gradin, commissioner for financial control: Padraig Flynn, commissioner for employment and social affairs; and Martin Bangemann,

Mr van den Broek and Christos Papoutsis, the energy commissioner, are expected to bow out at the end of the year. If no substantial figure is chosen, either Sir Leon or Mr van den Brock could be appointed as a 'of 20 commissioners could not denial". The President of the

Mr Santer may have sealed

departure with a dramatic re- management". Ms Cresson action to the cooclusions of poured petrol on the flames by the report of a committee of independent experts.

"whiter than white". His team "has to bear responsibility for Maria Gil-Robles, also backed

"careless", which produced an The President of the Com- outcry among MEPs. Alan Donmission described himself as nelly, leader of Labour's 60 MEPs, said Mr Santer was "in accept the cooclusion that it European Parliament, Jose

practice proves unrealistic". It

Its conclusions argued that po- even the slightest sense of relitical responsibility "cannot be sponsibility". Although there telling reporters she had been a vague idea, a concept which in was no evidence of a case "where a commissioner was diadded: "The studies carried out rectly and personally involved in: by the committee have too often fraudulent activities", thererevealed a growing reluctance were instances where "comamong the members of the hi-missioners or the Commission erarchy to acknowledge their re- as a whole bears responsibilitysponsibility. It is becoming for instances of fraud, irregu-

Euro-sceptics ready to capitalise on the confusion

BRITISH MINISTERS fear that BY ANDREW GRICE the crisis in Brussels will play Political Editor into the hands of the Eurosceptics and make it harder for force "complacent" member for joining the single radical reforms.

Yesterday Mr Blair sought to turn the débacle to his advantage by unveiling plans for wide-ranging reform of the European Commission.

Allies insisted that he now

Tony Blair to win public support states, led by France, to accept the next general election.

ministers were gloomy. "It is a significant setback," said one. We thought we had killed off the main bogeyman when Oskar Lafontaine [the German Finance Minister] resigned. had a golden opportunity to per- Now the sceptics have found suade other EU countries to another one in the Commis-

be forced to delay the referendum he had planned to call after

In an emergency Commons statement, Mr Blair agreed that "Europhobes" could exploit the crisis, but insisted that it was an "opportunity to push through root-and-branch reform of the Commission."

sion." Some ministers even

predicted that Mr Blair would

paper nn Britain's plans to An overhaul of the commission to sion's auditing procedures, management". But he reacted

LIGHTING UP

Gerhard Schröder, the Ger-financial management, spend-coolly to demands for the Eu-was by no means solely reman Chancellor, when they held talks in Downing Street. The sweeping changes pro-

posed include: A new contract between the of government of the 15 EU member states. Setting up an independent in-

vestigation office to probe fraud Last night he submitted a and financial irregularities.

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

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ing plans and awarding of ropean Parliament to be given

Commission officials to be fully accountable for their budgets and programmes. European Council - the heads for staff who fall short of and practically possible". expectations.

sels inquiry report, which he said had "revealed a sad cata-

the Commission President, to crucial role in securing elections for the European Brussels Commission and the MA new disciplinary procedure leave "as soon as reasonably

Cabinet sources said the Mr Blair also endorsed the new president would have to be reforms proposed by the Brus-fully committed to reform. "We need a new broom for the project to have credibility," said an insider.

Mr Blair said that Mr Santer

sponsible for the problems, and alone should decide," he said. greater powers to hold the Brus- he pointed the finger of blame sels bureaucracy to account. at John Major, the former the controversy which could He called for Jacques Santer, prime minister, who played a boost their prospects In the vetoing moves to install Jean-

Prime Minister. Mr Blair called for an end to the "horse-trading" which re-sulted in the outsider Mr San-

Mr Santer's appointment by Parliament in June. The Opposition criticised Luc Dehaene, the Belgian Mr Blair for failing to learn a key lesson from the Brussels

much and interferes too often. It should be doing less, and ter getting the job five years doing it better," said William ago. The top jobs should go to Hague, the Tory leader.

The Tories were buoved by

BRITAIN TODAY Noon today SEA FOG FORECAST

General situation England and Wates will have a dry and very mild day with an early banks of log and low cloud lifting to leave surny spells in most places. The best of the sunshine is likely to be in central and southern areas with some duli interludes over coasts and hills in the north and west. Scotland and Northern in land will also be very mild with surny intervals developing in sheltered eastern areas, but western regions will have a lot of doud and some local drizzle.

Cent N England, NW & NE England, Wales, Lake Dist, Isle of Man: Rother cloudy across the hills, but mild with periods of sunshine elsewhere. A light west to south-westerly wind. Max temp 13-15C (55-59F). NE & SE Soucland, Edinburgh, Aberdeen: Some cloud over the hills, but mild and dry with good sunny periods elsewhere. A moderate south-westerly wind.

Conc S England, W Midiands: Early fog lifting to leave warm sursh and variable breeze, Max temp 13-16C (55-61F).

NW & SW Scotland, Glasgow, N & W Isless Rather cloudy with some drizzle on coasts and hills, but mild with a few surny breaks possible. A moderate to Iresh south-westerly wind. Max temp 10-12C (50-54F). It Ireland: Cloudy on western coasts and hils but dry and mild with good sunn spells elsewhere. A moderate south-westerly wind. Max temp 11-14C (52-57F).

It will turn noticeably colder with sunny spells and showers in most places. The showers will be heaviest and most frequent in the north with sleet and snow mixed in. Drifting snow is likely over the Scottish fills.

London: A12 Green Man Roundabout, Leytonstone, Major roadworks on new M11 fink road. Until 31st December. Bristot: M5 J18-19. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 23rd June 2001. Warwickthine: M42 Between J10 Tarnworth services and 38 Sution Coldfield. Readworks and contratiow. Until 23rd April. South Yorisahire: M1 Between J34 Tinsley Viaduct (A6178). Sheffield. Carriageway is reduced to two tanes southbound. Until 21st November 2000.

18t August.
Derbyshine: A6 Between Derby Southern
Bypase (A50) and Shardlow Road roundabout. East of Ahreston. Contradou for work.
on new A50. Until 15th October.
AA Roadwatch: Call 0336 401777 for On new ASO, Until 1901 CERCORY,
AA Roadstratch: Call 0336 401777 for
the latest local and national traffic news.
Source: The Automobile Association, Calls



lettest: Aulthea 0.79 mm For 24hrs to 2pm Yuesday RAIN OR SHINE...

THE RISK OF being hit by lightning in Singapore has become so high that the government is erecting special lighting shelters and fitting school playgrounds with earlywarning devices. Yesterday, one Thai labour-er was killed and another injured when lightning struck their construction site. Singapore has one of the world's highest rates of lightning strikes - 20 per sq km each year

THE WORLD EUROPE NOON TODAY THE ATLANTIC NOON TODAY

Nations rush to back their own members THE CITIZENS of Europe woke By IMRE KARACS up to a frightening vacuum at

the heart of the Brussels bureaucracy yesterday, but were quickly reassured by a wave of sobdarity bursting from every capital of the continent. Solidarity, that is, for each nation's representative in Brussels. Britain proudly led the way

once more, with Tony Blair rai-lying behind his beleaguered commissioners, Messrs Kinnock and Brittan. The others soon followed.

Italy, for instance, expressed itself appalled by the goings-on in Brussels, and demanded that the new commissioners be appointed quickly. The two Italian members of the discredited body, Emma Bonino and Mario Monti, were, of course, totally beyond reproach.

The Government expresses solidarity and appreciation for their deep commitment during these years ... and also for the correctness of their work, which was confirmed by the independent committee," Rome swiftly declared.

Finland seemed delighted with the mass resignation, saying it should pave the way for a more efficient successor. But the Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, did not want the clear-out to go too far. It should certainly not involve Erkki Liikanen, who was in charge of budgetary affairs.

"The Finnish government has full confidence in Commissioner Erkki Liikanen," Mr Lipponen said. He has been fully cleared in the report."

So that's all right then. This scandal, after all, had nothing to do with the EU budget. And so it went on. "There is no doubt that a new Commis-

sion must be appointed which has new people in important positions," said Viktor Klima, the Austrian Chancellor. Mr Klima obviously did not think the agricultural portfolio,

which swallows a third of the EU's budget, is very "impor-tant", for he quickly added the following caveat: "That doesn't necessarily apply to all, however ... and I personally don't doubt the integrity of Commis-sioner Fischler." And yes ... Franz Fischler,

the agriculture commissioner,

Not all countries, it has to be said, proved so patriotic. The French government pointedly refrained from mentioning Edith Cresson's name. And Germany stopped short of putting in a plug on behalf of its two stalwarts. Both, in fact. had been on the way out for sound political reasons, and the Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's Greens cannot wait to

fill one of those pairs of shoes. The Germans were in any case too busy trying to find successors. Germany is suffering. from a surfeit of superannuat politicians eminently qualified for the top job in Brussels. Alas, Helmut Kohl was ruled out by his party within minutes of his hat landing in the ring.

after night of the long knives

'A completely ignominious way for them to be sacked'

THERE WAS not even a hint of By KATHERINE BUTLER illicit sex but the sensational con- in Brussels tents of the 140-page report into cronyism and fraud in the European Commission could not have generated a bigger media frenzy if the Clinton investigator Kenneth Starr himself had been eading the inquiry.

Hordes of journalists, television crews and photographers stampeded when the trolley laden with boxes of the first copies was wheeled into the Euopean Parliament at 6.45pm. Like bargain hunters on the first day of Harrods' sale they jostled each other out of the way, ripping copies away from rivals.

Within seconds, they were leaning into taxis or bellowing the juiciest quotes about France's commissioner Edith Cresson and her dentist down mobile phones to every capital in Europe.

A few hundred metres away at the Breydel building, the headquarters of the Commission, fleets of black limousines were massed. Inside, those commissioners who had not been quizzed by the committee of wise men on Sunday were seeing the report for the first time.

Franz Fischler, the Austrian in charge of agriculture, was not mentioned in the document. But as be turned the final page he told an aide to prepare a statewould resign. "He just read the conclusions and be knew it was

all over" a source said. MEPs were swift to bray for the Leonardo scheme, a blood but at that stage on Monyouth training project. day evening the targets were just Ms Cresson and, to a lesser extent, the Commission Preshest ident, Jacques Santer. Pat Cox.

flanked by Paul van Buitenen, the Commission whistle-blower who was suspended for revealing the corruption. The Tories called for all 20 commissioners to be sacked but few imagined this would happen.

"I have been very knnely" the Dutchman said, "And I still am not certain about what is going to happen to me."

Edith Cresson, the former commissioner for education and training who yesterday de-fiantly said "Je ne regrette rien", might have been thinking along the same lines as Mr van Buitenen, but she was giving nothing away. The Commission was sched-

uled to meet at 9pm but the start time slipped as commissioners and their aides pored over the document. Some had brought in food, expecting a long right. But as the devastating im-

plications of the conclusions sank in - particularly the charge that the commissioners had lost control and had displayed not the slightest sense of political responsibility for the fraud. and mismanagement - there was a final attempt to force Ms Cresson to take the rap. She had been singled out not

only for hiring her dentist in the ment. Whatever the outcome of fictitious capacity of visiting the Commission's meeting, he scientist, but also for deliberately misleading both her colleagues and the European Parliament over known fraud in MEPs were swift to bray for the Leonardo scheme, a £400m In ones and twos her col-

leagues beat a path to her door suggesting that she might want to reconsider her position. But the Parliament's Liberal leader, a phone call between Mr Sanbinted that if Ms Cresson was ter and Lionel Jospin, the She was now looking for the short-lived resistance. Rot gone before nightfall the French Prime Minister, established to be add of all 20 commissioners. Ritt Bjerregaard, the tot gone before nightfall the French Prime Minister estab-MEP Edward McMillan-Scott The French were not going to Commission to accept responcalled a press conference allow a former prime minister sibility for the conclusions of the she saw no reason to be tarred



minious way to be sacked. In the office of the British commissioner, Neil Kinnock, there was consternation when only the Spanish interpretation channel could be found. Pavline Green, leader of the 200 Socialists - who helped save the Commission a mass sacking in January - was about to make

demise on the closed circuit

television link. It was an Igno-

ber public statement. That was the turning point.

to stand by Ms Cresson led in turn to pressure from Paris on the French Socialist MEPs. The Socialist move ensured that if the commissioners did not go, they would be pushed.

"After that a great calm descended," recalled one official. "The choice was pretty clear." The Commission's meeting began at 10.20pm with a fourminute introduction from Jacques Santer. The mass resignation scenario was tabled immediately and met only

Ritt Bierregaard, the Dane game would be up. British Tory lished what many had feared. "We are calling on the European in charge of environment policy, was one of those who said

with the same brush as Ms a body the Commission ad- terday morning as the dis- cases of irregularities," he said. Cresson, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, France's commissioner for monetary policy, said he thought everyone should have resigned in January when the censure motion was first voted.

Both Mr Kinnock and the Irish Padraig Flynn said that although the report was unbalanced there was no response to the verdict but a collective resignation. Ms Cresson said little but maintained a demeanour one source summed up merely as "Cressonesque".

After agreeing to resign as

compose himself and draft a statement for the press, Mr Fischler beat him to it with a statement announcing his own resignation. The game was up.

At about 10 minutes to 1.00am, a grim-faced Mr Santer took the lift down to the basement where the airless overheated press centre was beaving with excitement. It took only a few seconds. There were no questions allowed and

Mr Santer returned to his office. The sun was shining yes-

journed, leaving Mr Santer to graced commission team reconvened at the Breydel, Early interviews on French radio had caught Ms Cresson off guard. For the first time she admitted she may bave been "a little careless", although she still had "no regrets".

The crisis was the kind of crisis you only get in Brussels. Mr Santer appeared before the press again this time to say he was "whiter than white" and would be going down fighting. "I do not accept that four years a radio interview, as the new, of work can be reduced to six uncertain dawn broke.

Mr Fischler went to address a routine agricultural committee meeting. Mr Kinnock met a delegation from the European electronics and aviation industry, and the Finnish commissioner, Erkki Liikanen, bravely honoured a breakfast appointment with journalists.

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It was left to the British trade commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, to sum up events of the previous night most succinctly. "It is a disaster," he said in



Journalists watching Edith Cresson speaking at European Commission headquarters in Brussels before Jacques Santer announced the body's resignation

Shadowy world of the 'state within a state'

ming Jacques Santer's "state within a state".

ader appraisal for calm on the EU AP

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WHAT TOPPLED the Commis- By Stephen Castle sion was not damning revela- in Brussels tions of corruption but the shadowy world of former intel- veillance. The inquiry con-

that the President controlled, staffed by a former French intelligence official, Claude Willeme, and a one-time Belgian police colonel. Although they reported di-

rectly to the office of Mr Santer, the palace guards became a law unto themselves, apparently beyond the control of the Commission's most senior staff. The report complains that

"no supervision was exercised allowed to develop". The security staff even put the Commission's own internal fraud-busting team under sur- service simply "covered for his police [in December 1997]".

cluded that they were a clique, "a private club for former police officers from Brussels or the vicinity, for whom special recruitment competitions' were

The scandal which led to the investigation revolved around the awarding of a contract for security work to the British security agency Group 4. The report starts in 1992,

highlighting the behaviour of 10 security guards who accompanied the then commissioner Jacques Delors to the Seville World Exhibition. "Their behaviour (feet on the table, and a 'state within a state' was heavy drinking etc) was considered intolerable," it said. However, when complaints were made, the director of the ex-colonel from the Belgian



Delors: 1992 controversy

staff". The document sheds light on how key posts in the security service were allotted. "On the recommendation from the director of security in Belgium, the director of the security office recruited into the Commission Security Office an

The ex-colonel then had to be moved from his post, five days after a heightened state of alert during the Gulf war, when "no particular measures had been

The report puts part of the blame for the state of the security service on Mr Santer and a lack of "meaningful interest".

The text directly indicts Edith Cresson for favouritism. The charge centres on her decision to employ Rene Berthelot, a dentist from her home town of Chatellerault as a scientific visitor. It notes Mr Berthelot's frequent "missions" to Chatellerault and says: "It is hard to understand why Chatellerault... should be almost the sole centre of interest of a visiting scientist whose remit... covered very wide fields."

The report is on the website: http://www.europarl.eu.int/ex-

Worst moment for fiasco

IF EUROPE'S most deadly By RUPERT CORNWELL enemy had been allowed to choose the moment of the European Union's biggest insti- far "Europe is not without lead- regime and the common agritutional crisis in 42 years, he ership," Chancellor Gerhard cultural policy. The financial could have done no better than. Schröder asserted yesterday. this one.

Monday night's resignation sions on regional and agricullargement to the east.

It comes, moreover, midway that is still reeling from the departure of the country's finance . settled for three months at least. minister, and which has not

Others might beg to differ.

Leaders of the 15 EU memen masse of the European Com- ber countries cannot win. The mission has decapitated the choice lies between allowing a EU's central institution in the caretaker Commission shorn run-up to long-overdue deci- of credibility to stay in office or devoting precious time and enestitutional reform-all of them a new one. A further complicasuming that the new assembly

clare a moratorium in its doublebarrelled trade assault on the management of EU affairs thus EU, against the banana import markets will not give the euro, which has dropped 8 per cent since its January launch, the benefit of the doubt until the Commission's house is in order.

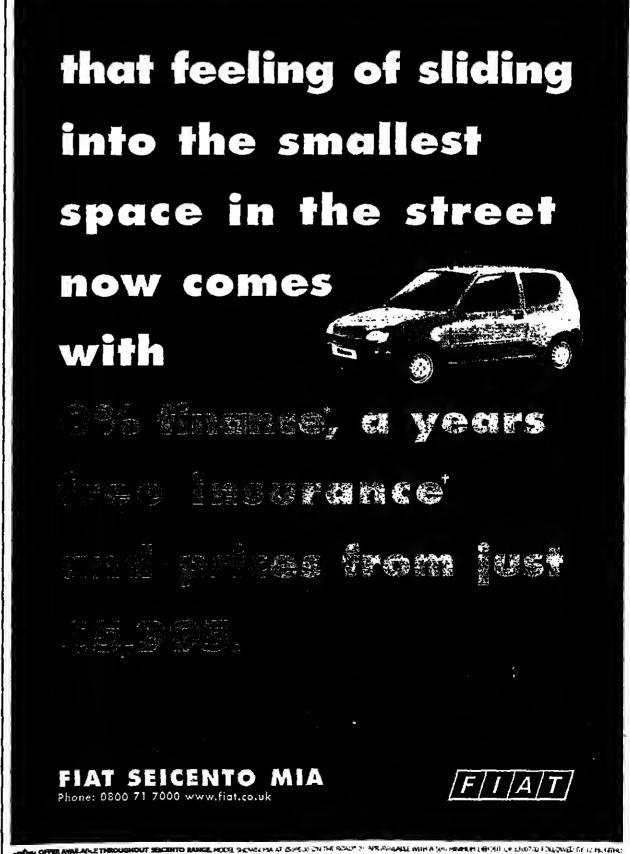
Most important of all is Agenda 2000, reordering the farm and regional spending tural policies, and financial and ergy to the task of nominating that accounts for the overwhelming bulk of the EU's anpreconditions to the planned ention will be the June elections for mual budget and streamlining the European Parliament, As- institutions which barely function now and would collapse enthrough a German presidency insists on its right to approve a tirely under the weight of a union of 20, 21, or even 26.

EU leaders were due to cut But business will not wait. the Gordian knot at their sumcovered itself with glory in the The United States will not demit in Berlin next week. Dis-

tracted by the implosion in Brussels, they will now find the task even more difficult, and the whole business may slip into the second half of 1999, by which time the Euro-novice Finland will have assumed the presidency. All members accept that without a deal on Agenda 2000, enlargement will be impossible. Small wonder that Sir Leon

Brittan, the outgoing vice-president of the Commission and Britain's senior representative in Brusssels, yesterday described events as "a disaster" which had to be handled with "ruthless determination".

But ruthless determination has not been a hallmark lately of either the member states nor the Commission which runs Europe in their name.



PARTY OF LINEAR PARTY RECEIPTION OF THE CONTROL OF

TOMORROW WITH 'Chronic failure' at heart hospital



Sowhy didyou gointo teaching, Miss Jones?'

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malfunctioning hospital was painted yesterday at the opening of the public inquiry into the deaths of babies who under-

Royal Infirmary. Tracey Clarke described failures at every level in the care of her daughter Melissa, who died 10 days after undergoing

heart surgery in October 1991. The mistakes, omissions and lack of care described by Mrs Clarke, 36, from Devon, went far

A PICTURE of a chronically By JEREMY LAURANCE Health Editor

> surgeons who were found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the General Medical Council (GMC) last year. She spoke of communication failures, faults in equipment, lack of support and a reluctance to confront problems which resulted in Melissa being kept on a ventilator for days after she

was brain dead. Mrs Clarke, who with her beyond the behaviour of the husband Graham is planning

legal action against the infir-records show that the operation mary, was the first of at least 500 witnesses due to give evidence to the inquiry chaired by lan Kennedy professor of health law and ethics at University College, London.

Melissa was born with the main arteries to her heart transposed, causing her frequently to turn bine because too little oxygen was getting into her blood. She was operated on by Janardan Dhasmana, one of the three doctors found guilty by the GMC last year. Hospital

went well. Mrs Clarke, who saw her daughter immediately after the surgery, said: "She looked lovely. She was pink and all the blue tinge had gone. I

thought everything was fine." It emerged yesterday, however, that 48 hours after the operation a problem occurred with the ventilator helping Melissa to breathe. A postmortem examination report, which Mrs Clarke did not see until several years later, said Melissa had suffered respira-

tory failure "partially due to a words are ingrained on my mechanical failure in the ven-mind." Next morning site and tilator". The report said it was "several hours" before "satisfactory oxygenation" was achieved. A second record referred to "split tubes" on the

ventilator. Mrs Clarke told the inquiry: "On the Thursday [nine days after the operation] I was not happy with what I was being told. I rang twice, the second time at 10.30pm, and I spoke to a doctor who said everything was going as planned. Those

her husband were called to the hospital. "We walked into the intensive care unit and all the nurses turned their backs on us."

After a three-hour wait, the couple saw Dr Stephen Bolsin. the consultant anaesthetist credited with blowing the whistle on the surgery failures. He admitted there was no hope for Melissa and that she was brainstem dead.

The next day, the hospital told Mrs Clarke her daughter was still alive. She suggested it was time to switch off the ventilator. Half an hour later a nurse phoned to say Melissa had died in her arms.

cons

The infirmary omitted to inform the Clarkes' lucal hospital in Excter that Melissa had died and six months later the couple received a letter about a missed appointment. Last month, eight years after their daughter's death, they learned the infirmary had kept her heart for two. months after the post-mortem

Black youth in coma after racist beating

A BLACK teenager was seri-ously ill in hospital last night after being beaten into a coma by a gang of white youths in a racially motivated attack.

David Virgo, 19, was punched to the ground and then kicked unconscious after teaving a pub disco in the West Midlands with two friends on Saturday night. He recovered consciousness yesterday.
Witnesses told police the

trainee landscape gardener's head was "kicked like a football". His mother June was at his bedside last night at Rus-sells Hall Hospital in Dudley, where his condition was described as serious but stable.

The attack is believed to be the most serious racial incident in Britain since the publication last month of Sir William Macpherson's report into the death of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence.

Detective Inspector John Larkin, of West Midlands Police, said: "We know David was viciously assaulted. He was punched to the floor and repeatedly kicked. One witness sald his head was kicked like a

"It was a racially motivated attack, mercilessly and brutally inflicted. This was an borrifie and brutal assault on a lad who had gone out to enjoy himself for an evening with friends."

Home Affairs Correspondent

Mr Virgo's father, Eluid, said last night: "When I was told what had happened to my son I could not believe it . Nobody deserves to be treated like that. The people who did this are wicked men."

The victim's sister, Marie, aged 29, said: "I was really shocked when I saw him. His face was badly beaten and the major injuries are to his head. He is a fun-toving quiet lad who likes to go out with his mates. He never goes out look-ing for trouble."

Chris Myant, of the Com-mission for Racial Equality, said the attack was a signal that society as a whole, not just the police, had to make more strenuous efforts to tackle racism.

He said: "This shows that unfortunately there are young people in Britain who don't appear to have shared the general public response to the death of Stephen Lawrence."

Police believe there were three members of the white gang and are appealing for wit-nesses to the attack, which happened at about 11.30pm outside a fish and chip shop in Blackheath High Street. Earlier in the evening Mr Virgo and his



friends had visited a disco at the nearby George and Dragon pub.

An image of actor Terence Stamp will be on show in 'The Eye That Never Sleeps' the first retrospective of nearby George and Dragon pub.

An image of actor Terence Stamp will be on show in 'The Eye That Never Sleeps' the first retrospective of nearby George and Dragon pub.

'Sun' sets on career of spin doctor

BY RHYS WILLIAMS

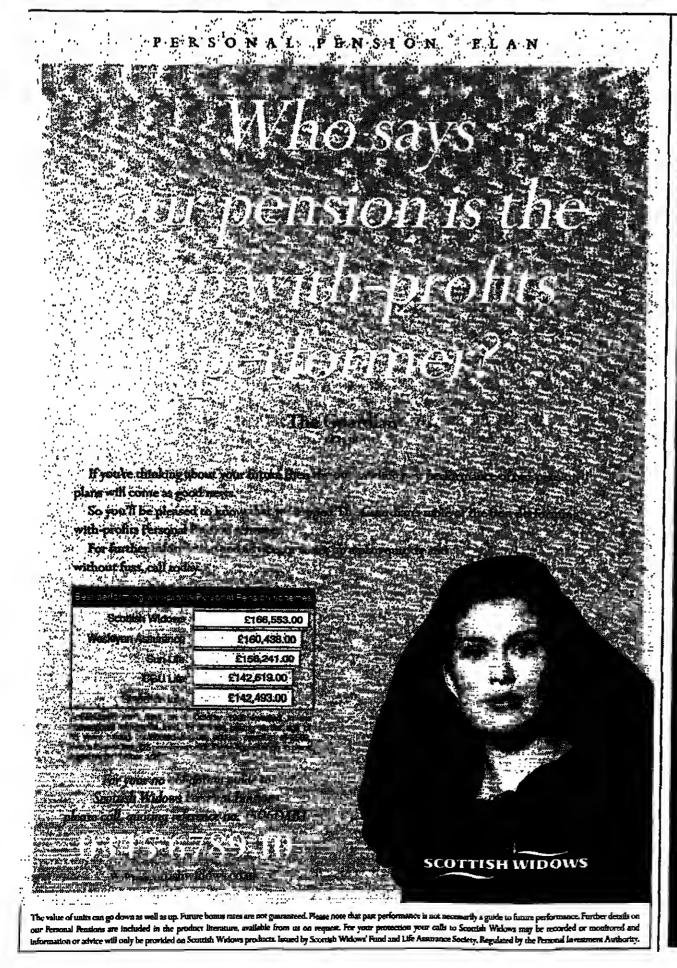
examination.

THE JOURNALISTIC CAFEER OF Peter Mandelson's former side, Benjamin Wegg-Prosser, ended before it began vesterday when it emerged that he will no

longer be joining The Sun. Mr Wegg-Prosser had been expecting to start work as an assistant to the paper's editor. David Yelland, next Tuesday However, following the hardening of The Sun's opposition to the euro, the two sides have agreed to part company even though, strictly speaking, they did not come together in the ... first place. Sources indicated that the split was also precipitated by fears among The Sun's political staff that employing Mr. Wegg-Prosser would lead to accusations that it was climbing into bed with New Labour

The Sun has decided it is no longer appropriate to employme following its decision to . take a more emphatic line on the euro," Mr Wegg-Prosser, 24. said yesterday, "Ill has acted ... honourably throughout." . .

The Sun announced it was hiring the former Labour aide in the wake of Mr Mandelson's resignation as Secretary of .. State for Trade and Industry in. . January, Mr Wegg-Prosser was expected to earn £13,000 for acting as a political adviser to Mr Yelland. It is understood the paper's political staff were decidedly cool about the idea.



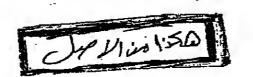
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'Sun' sets on career of spin doctor By RHYS WILLIAMS

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Ital Chief constable: MP was in sauna

THE CHIEF Constable of BY PAUL WAUGH Northampton police raised the stakes in the controversy sur-rounding Labour MP Joe Ashton yesterday when he claimed the backbencher had given "misleading" information to his officers.

Chris Fox, the head of the force, appeared to directly contradict the Bassetlaw MP's account of how he was found in a massage parlour during a po-

Confirming for the first time that Mr Ashton was on the premises in the Northampton parlour, Mr Fox said that his officers had been forced to run a computer check to check the MP's identity.

Mr Fox said that Mr Asbton was subsequently interviewed by police in the presence of his solicitor and declined to give a witness statement

The Police Constable said he had decided to give more de-tails about the raid on the Thai massage parlour in Northampton last November because much of the information was already in the public domain.

Four people were arrested on suspicion of committing sexual offences and a number of Thai women were deported for breaches in the immigration

The police announcement came a day after Mr Ashton denied that he had taken part in or paid for any sexual services at the parlour and said he had not given "inaccurate particulars" of his name and address.

The 65-year-old MP said on Monday that he was considering calling for a full Police Complaints Anthority inquiry into how his name had been leaked

He claimed that the reports in Sunday tabloid newspapers could have only come from Northamptonshire Police and warned that he might take the ble's statement.

Political Correspondent

matter up with the Data Protection Registrar.

Mr Fox said yesterday that if any member of his staff was involved in leaking information to the media about the raid they would be "dealt with in the

strongest possible way". No official complaint had been received, but he said that the force had its reputation and integrity to protect and would treat seriously any allegations of breaches of confi-

"Allegations of this kind can be extremely damaging to the force and I have yet to find out why people are so sure that any leaks must have come from Northamptonshire police," he said. "There were a great many other people with knowledge of this case - defendants, witnesses, legal representatives, other organisations and other

He would be writing to Mr Ashton to ask him to substantiate his allegations that his police force might have been responsible for leaking details.

A statement by the force said: "When questioned at the weekend about Mr Ashton's presence at the massage par-lour during the raid, Northamptonshire Police confirmed that one man was present when officers executed their warrant. "They said he was not com-

mitting any offence and that he declined to assist the police as a witness, which he was perfectly entitled to do. "However, now that it is in the public domain, Northamp-

tonshire Police confirm that Mr Ashton was present at the massage parlour when the warrants were executed." The Labour Party refused to

Miss Audrey Collins (left) and Miss Diana Rait Kerr, among the first MCC women members, with a portrait of WG Grace Stefan Rousseau

Women enter Lord's inner sanctum

THE LONG Room at Lord's By JOHN DAVISON cricket ground yesterday opened its doors to women and made history when the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) proudly displayed its first female members.

The occasion marked the end of more than 200 years of resistance to women in this. the most famous club in cricket, and took place at the home comment on the Chief Consta-

ident, said: "I hope you enjoy

your membership. Don't relax and women members. A simtoo much - we will need your experience and belp as the culture of this great club

Assuring the 10 women that they have "not been pawns in the popular game of social or political correctness", he added: "The unanimous thinkply this ... we could not claim liner through 180 degrees," he the progress of this, he kept to be a great cricket club un-

less we had a women's team ple equation. The first MCC women's team takes the field on May 11 in East Moleseg Sur-

It had been one matter for a committee to decide on such a change and quite another to persuade almost 18,000 members to agree with it. "It was Tony Lewis, the MCC pres- ing of the committee was sim- like turning an ocean-going

One of the first women members, former England women's cricket captain Rachael Heyhoe Flint sald: "I might be referred to as the catalyst, who in 1991 had the temerity to apply to become a member." Among her supporters was the late commentator Brian Johnston, and she said: "I wish Johnners was

saying to me, 'it will eventual-ly happen, but I doubt whether I shall see it in my lifetime'."

Former England cricketer Lord Cowdrey said: "I think it's a wonderful day and I look forward to the day when the MCC ladies cricket team makes a big impact in the game."

Another former England captain, Ted Dexter said: "It it just took a little time to see here today, because during the wood from the trees."

Chess to get sport status

By JOHN DAVISON

THERE was rejoicing in the cerebral world of chess yesterday, following the news that the game of wit and guile is about to make it to full sporting status.

Being ranked alongside the likes of football, athletics and synchronised swimming means that chess would be eligible for grants from sporting bodies.

The announcement was made by Tony Banks, the Sports minister, in a Commons debate on Monday, who said the Government was willing to legislate for the necessary changes. The British sports councils would also have to change their royal charters in order to accommodate chess, he said, after which the new "sport" should also be eligible for lottery funding

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This is excellent news," said Robin Mackley, a director of the British Chess Federation. "It is something we have been striving to achieve for many years."

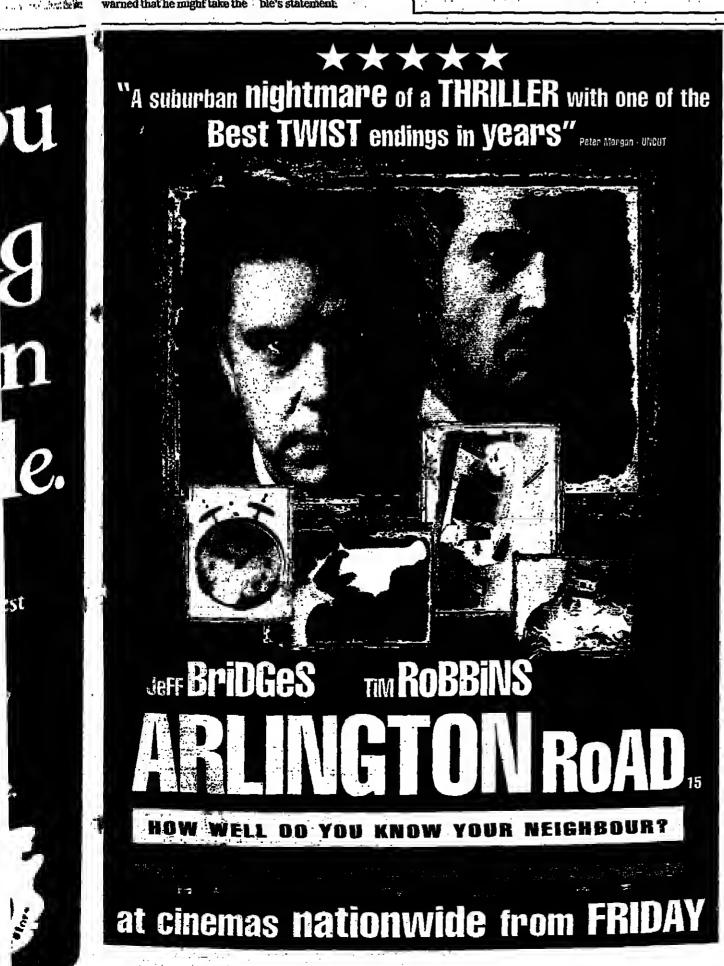
But difficulties revolve about the definition of a sport in the 1937. Physical Training and Recreation Act, which inconveniently for chess includes the idea of some degree of physical effort. No problem, said the bold Mr Banks, he will simply have it altered. Chess and other "mind games" are to included in a "cultural framework Bill",

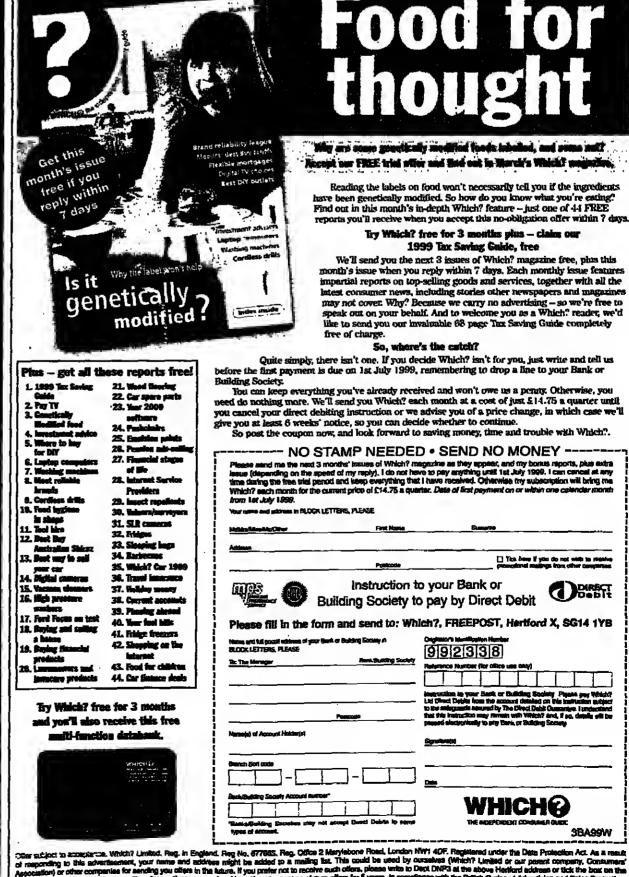
The debate was introduced by Evan Harris, Liberal Democrat MP for Oxford West and Abingdon, himself a former schoolboy chess champion. He pointed out that Britain was the second- or third-best chess nation in the world. "Our success at it is something we should be more proud of," he said. Support from an unexpected

source came from Ellery Hanley, the legendary rugby league player and coach at St Helens. "It's got my vote," he said, having been assured that he wasn't the victim of a "wind up". "I think it is good to have an outlet in doing something else. Mine is chess ... It gives you that time to think, and patience as well. Eric Cantona, that other

sporting sage, could not have put it better. Leading article,

Review, page 3





Nelson assassination: Kent chief constable will head murder inquiry in effort to quell rumours over links to bombing

Police to investigate RUC 'collusion'

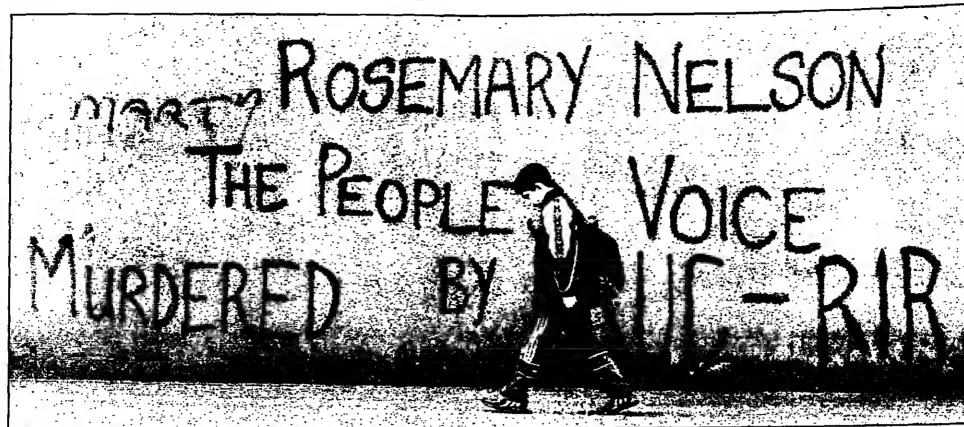
Ireland Correspondent

THE ROSEMARY Nelson killing and the unanswered questions surrounding it vesterday resulted in the Royal Ulster Constahulary calling in officers from England and from the FBI to assist in its investigation.

The move followed a wave of criticism and allegations against the RUC from nationalist and human rights sources. With accusations of collusion thick in the air, the force clearly believed it had to move swiftly to counter criticisms that it would be investigating itself.

The Chief Constable, Sir Ronnie Flanagan, announced he had asked the Chief Constable of Kent, David Phillips, to head the investigation, and that the FBI would also be involved. He added: "I think it is important, when there are grave concerns about Mrs Nelson on the international front, that their involvement will also give this investigation an international dimension as well as added independence. I recognise this is an unprecedented case in the nature of the sort of allegations that have

In Washington, the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, described Mrs Nelson, who was fatally injured by an undercar boobytrap bomb on Monday, as "a brave woman in the past six months, the pos-



Graffiti that appeared after the murder of Rosemary Nelson. The solicitor claimed she had been the victim of 'numerous death threats' from police officers Alan Lewis

lieved in and carried those beliefs into her work".

Although the murder was claimed by the Red Hand Defenders, a small grouping responsible for two other killings

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who stood up for what she be- sibility that it had help from a larger loyalist organisation is being investigated. Undercar boobytraps were a regular feaolence until the early Nineties, but they have remained outside the capabilities of almost all loy-

tion to this has been the Ulster Defence Association, which has mounted four such attacks in which resulted in a death. The possibility of a largescale return to UDA violence is

alist organisations. The excep- of major concern to the authorities. All elements of the political spectrum are wondering how the killing will affect the ture of the IRA's campaign of vi- just over two years, one of peace process and the chances of finding agreement on a new, developed government.

In Lurgan, Co Armagh,

parish priest Father Kieran McParlan said Mrs Hamilton's husband and three children were shocked and distressed by the killing. "They are numb, feeling very helpless and in need of support and care."

In the city of Londonderry.

solicitors staged a march to an RUC station. One of them, Paddy McDermott, said they wished to express disquiet at the murder and solidarity with the Nelson family. "We wish to suspects and their lawyers." make it clear that we want to

dent investigation into Rosemary's death and into the threats which were made against her life."

Param Cumaraswamy the United Nations special invest tigator to whom Mrs Nelson had complained of police intirmdation, said he had feared for her life. Describing her as a very courageous human rights lawyer, he added: "Though I feared that Rose mary's life was at stake. I really didn't expect this to happen to her and this is really a shock."

Mrs Nelson had been due to meet a police watchdog body on 30 March to hear the results of an investigation into her complaints that she had been the subject of death threats and assaults from offcers of the RUC. She had arranged to meet the independent Police Complaints Commission to discuss the findings of an inquiry set up after a UN human rights report last year, which quoted complaints from Mrs Nelson that she had been the victim of numerous death threats".

It was the latest in a long line of reports into human rights issues in Northern Ireland which describe a pattern in which RUC detectives onestioning paramilitary suspects are said to threaten both the

Mowlam plea for gesture to end stalemate

MO MOWLAM led a minute's si- BY ANDREW MARSHALL lence in Washington yesterday in Washington for the murdered solicitor Rose mary Nelson. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland was in the United States for meetings and St Patrick's Day cele-

Ms Nelson had been identified by human rights groups as being at only "low-grade" risk in Northern Ireland, said Ms Mowlam. She had not wanted protection from the RUC.

Ms Mowlam said that she believed a way out of the current impasse over the new Assembly was possible, and that Northern Ireland was "a bair's stretched out for weeks if not breadth away" from a deal that months. He also said he was would unblock progress on the concerned that the issue of denew executive.

British officials said that hopes were rising that a deal would be made following talks today in Washington between the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties and President Bill Clinton.

Ms Mowlam, Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, David Trimble, the First Minister. and Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein, will all be in Washington for the talks.

We are very far along this road. It would be a tragedy if we didn't keep on walking down it." said Ms Mowlam. "A gesture ... a beginning" was needed to end the stalemate between the nationalists and loyalists over whether Sinn Fein could take its place in the executive before decommissioning began. "Everybody is going to have to move. everybody is going to have to do something," she said.

David Trimble said that be hoped President Clinton would ask Gerry Adams to begin decommissioning. "The important thing that can be done by people here in Washington is to use what influence they have with those elements in Northern Ireland who have yet to begin their end of implementing the agreement," he said.

Sinn Fein are playing a "long game" he added, saying that he feared that progress on decommissioning might be commissioning might become entangled with the forthcoming report from Chris Patten, the former governor of Hong Kong, on policing in Northern Ireland.

US officials say that Mr Clinton will reiterate that all parties must respect the spirit as well as the letter of the Good Friday Agreement, and that some movement from Sinn Fein is

necessary. Seamus Mallon of the SDLP has outlined a formula that would see further British military withdrawals and demilitarisation, efforts to build confidence by identifying the burial sites of some of Northern Ireland's many "disappeared", and a clear commitment to begin disarmament

But the key would be a change of tack from Sinn Fein. "I think there's room in there for Sinn Fein to move," he

4.



Doctor 'ordered mercy killing' A nurse told a General Medical Council disciplinary hearing

yesterday that she had refused to take part in a mercy killing. June Bleasdale was deputising matron at a nursing home in Preston in 1995 when she claims Dr Ken Taylor. told her to withhold food supplements from Mrs X, 85, who died 58 days later. The case was adjourned until tomorrow.

President of NUS re-elected A LEFT-WING challenge for control of the 3 million-strong

National Union of Students was defeated yesterday as Andrew Pakes, the Labour candidate, was re-elected for a second term as president. Mr Pakes took more than 55 per cent of the vote at the NUS conference in Blackpool.

Villagers protect ringing of bells PURCHASERS OF new homes being built just a few yards from All Saints Church, Thurlestone, Devon, are being asked to sign an undertaking never to object to the sound

of its bells, regarded as a cherisbed part of village life. Over 50



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Police stations .ignored by public

stations, with their reassuring blue larges and 24-hour service. are numbered. A new study has found that many stations are so dilapidated and inconveniently located that they are

Birtley police station, near Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, is, or rather was, a perfect example of the problem which has been highlighted in the Audit Commission's report. A police survey found that during one year not a single member of the



PC Austin, who worked at

public telephoned or visited the station, as PC Trevor Austen, who was stationed there, confirmed. The people of Birtley (population 15,000) did not even notice when it was

closed down by the police.
Superintendent Brian Graham, who is in charge of the area surrounding Birtley in the Northumbria police region, said: "There was not a soul going to the station. It was in the Dark Ages and would have been very expensive to update. It was at the wrong end of the town and people were teleCrime Correspondent

phoning our central control room if they had a problem. We closed it down and didn't tell the public to see what response we would get; no one noticed."

The building is for sale and has been replaced by a mobile station in a caravan, which has resulted in a drop in crime.

The Audit Commission report, "Action Stations - Improving the Management of the Police Estate", found that policing priorities and the public's needs were rapidly changing. A survey in North-amptonshire discovered that people were more likely to go to a police station to report lost or stray dogs than to give details of a crime. The most popular reason for a visit to one of the 2,000 stations in England and Wales is to inquire about lost or found property, which accounts for one in five trips. Only three in every 100 people go to a station to report a crime.

The report claims that communities often fear that their area will be less safe without a local police station, "In fact, closing some stations or contracting opening times can release officers for more patrol," says the study by the public spending watchdog. Only a quarter of police sta-

tions are open 24 hours a day and most public contact takes place by telephone. Some forces, such as Greater Manchester, Sussex, and Lothian and Borders, have installed interactive computers on streets which have direct video links to police control rooms.



Bluewater: a shopping centre that has everything – except a sense of restraint

BLUEWATER IS the largest BY ANN TRENEMAN shopping mall in Europe and, as revealed at yesterday's opening, it is also probably the strangest. This is not nec-

essarily a bad thing. Most shopping malls are ghastly. Bluewater is not ghastly, it has seven lakes, a forest and 10,000 daffedils to blunt the truth of what goes on here. And that is shopping so excessive - there are 320 retail outlets - that it might be an Olympic sport before long.

Bluewater's spokeswoman does not agree. "It's not really a shopping mall at all. It's more of a Destination Day Out." She said I couldn't miss it. She was right. Bluewater looks like a fu-

turistic mini-city. The building has pointy bits on the roof which the architect, Eric Kuhne, says are supposed to resonate with the shape of the ny behind Bluewater. Kentish oast house. It reminded me of Madonna's old Gaultier bustier but that could just be because he's from Texas and Pm from Kent. It is easy to find and, with

13,000 parking spaces in specially designed people-friendly car parks (evidently a new concept), it is easy to park. Inside, you find yourself in a come area". I later learn this is designed to prepare me spend, spend, spend. "Here's a place to park your Spencer and House of Fraser.

husband, park your coat, get a cappuccino and then get ready to punch a hole through your credit card!" exulted Stuart Hornery, chairman of Lend

Lease, the Australian compa-I did none of those things but did manage to get lost. Bluewater comprises three malls

designed for three shopping experiences (I'm sorry to use such language but everyone does after breathing mall air for a few hours). The Guildhall is up-market, the Rose Gallery is family focus, the Thames Walk is the High Street. They are arranged in a triangle with each corner anchored by a store: John Lewis, Marks &

There I was, lost and not even begun as a poem. He comknowing what shopping experience I was supposed to be having, when I met a man. "Hello there!" he said.

"Who are you?" I demanded. Why I'm just someone saying hello," he said.

"Are you sure?" I asked. "Yes," he said. I was still suspicious.

why are you here?"

He then revealed he was reconsible for the toilets. He said they were the best toilets in any shopping mall ever. Quality, quality, quality.

The next man I met was the architect. Mr Kuhne is very large and tall, which is exactly how a Texan should be, and told me that Bluewater had

posed the sonnet in July 1996 as a way of distilling the project's ethos. His sonnet begins, "White chalk cliffs and waters blue/surround the crysengraved around the corner. tal city new" and ends with, "Build this dream with forthright hands and hearts that best with industry". But he said

"To one who has been long in city pent, Tis very sweet to look into

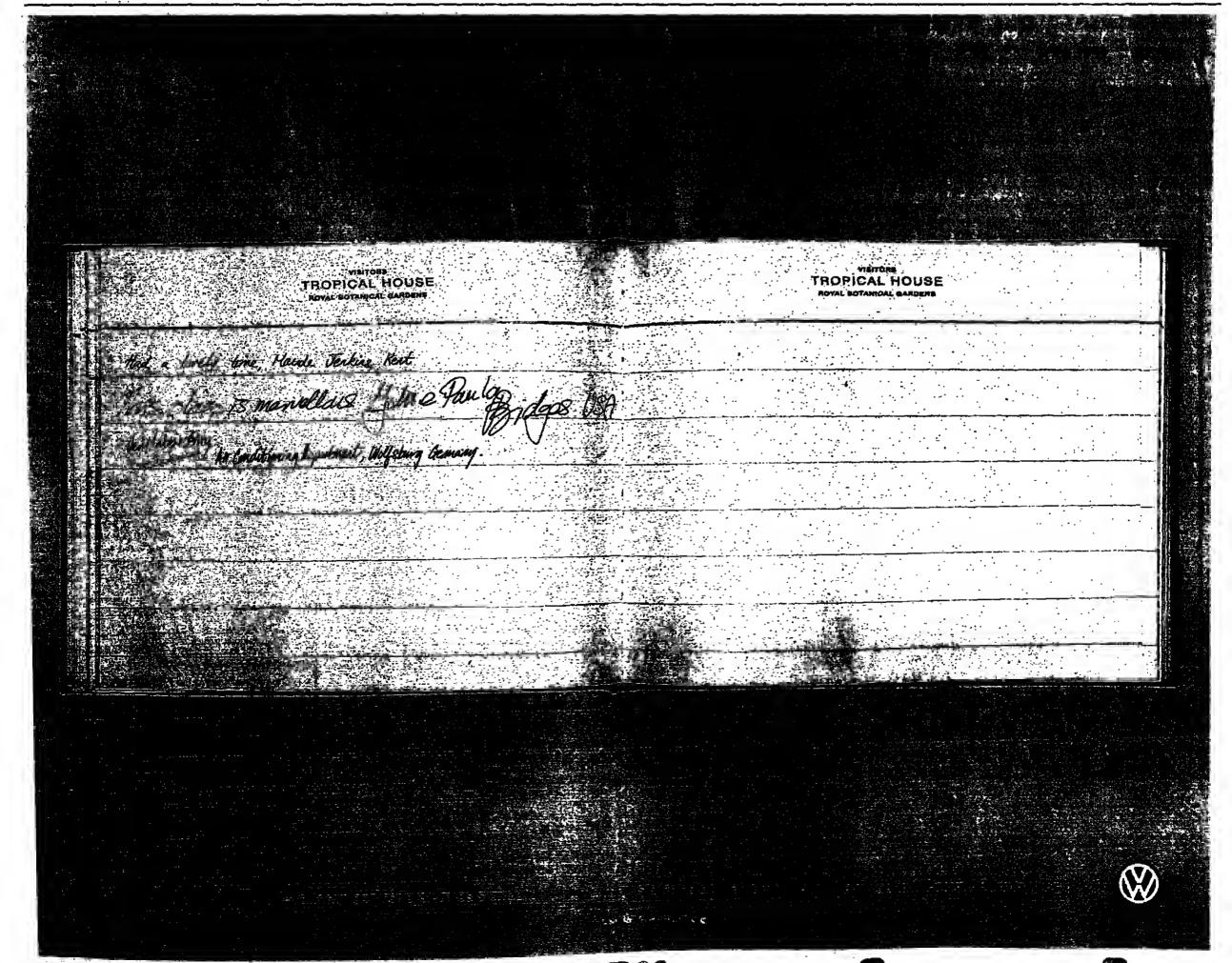
that Bluewater was really best

summed up by Keats. He said:

the fair And open face of heaven to breathe a prayer

Full in the smile of the hlue firmament," I said that I wasn't sure that took in the £350m investlong enough to say that actually, with the shops in, the place was now worth £1.12bn. Keats' words could be found

Bluewater is dotted with little seating areas. Most of the people seated in them are men. I introduced myself to Tony Sheppard, who had just bought a video. "Actually I'm really here to buy a wedding ring." He and his francée have been engaged for three years. He had already seen a few rings he liked. I mentioned poetry. "Great! I need some of that for the wedding." I didn't have the heart to tell him he is right smack in the middle of a Shopping Experience.



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Blair takes credit for mucking out the Augean stables

European Commission - a cleansing torrent which swept both the left behind a damp and slightly astonishing vacancy.

Yesterday the leaders of both parties turned up in the House of Commons to argue about the best ways of finishing the job and of preventing the manure from accumulating all over again. In theory, at least, the stimulating events of the past 24 hours were up for grabs by two implacably opposed groups -

"time for fewer borses".

Mr Blair began his statement by claiming that the broom which had initiated this scouring flood actually had the Labour Party's name leagues that complete hygiene was penned on to its handle - the motion to establish the committee of ex- bit of manure was good for the liveperts having come from the Labour group of the European Parliament. been swept away and along with

AT THE beginning of the week, the the pro-stable faction and the anti-serving historical footnote and, in Committee of Independent Experts stableites - but only one could finally truth, it did provide an uncharachad diverted a stream through the dung-spattered stables of the asset. The fight for possession was a speech that was otherwise brisk clearly going to start at once. Mr and commanding. The tone was not Blair's position could best be that of someone attempting to resleazy and the spotless before it and summed up as "more vigorous cover from a nasty setback but of stable hands now"; Mr Hague's as a man capitalising on an unexpected stroke of fortune.

For some time Britain had been calling for better waste management, only to be told by some European colimpracticable and by others that a stock. Now those arguments had



those who did not want to enter the stable. Handled in the right way. Mr Blair argued, this could be a triumph Tory MPs jeered loudly at this self-them, perhaps, the objections of for Northern farm management.

Matters were a little more difficult for Mr Hague, who at one point had the audacity to demand that the Government act decisively "to restore public confidence in changes of personnel would not pre-European institutions".

"Public confidence in European institutions" is very last thing that the scale of the European Com-Mr Hague actually wants. In truth, he and other Eurosceptics had woken to gloomy news yesterday; if you want to continue insulting a man on account of his unpleasant stink it is naturally a bit of a blow to find that he has just taken his first bath for 20 years and is currently browsing the anti-perspirant counter at Boots.

The only option open to Mr Hague was to argue that the problem was physiological and not superficial - that mere cosmetic vent this noisome pollution from arising again, only a diminution of

mission's activities. Mr Blair came back hard and personal, reading out endorsements of Jacques Santer's qualities from John Major and Francis Maude and then noting, pointedly, that the Conservative Party had "a habit of appointing compromise candidates who seem like a good idea at the time".

He also asked, like a man who cannot believe his luck, whether Mr Hague really had just committed the Conservative Party to a unitateral withdrawal from the Common Fisheries Policy.

Mr Hague nodded, having no alternative, but he didn't nod very vigorously and he didn't look very exhilarated as he did it. Whereas Mr Blair could plausibly claim to be surfing on this tidal wave, using its impressive momentum to get where he wanted to go in the first place. Mr Hague appeared to be tumbling along in its wake, trying desperately to keep his head above water as he went.

Failings in EU tolerated 'for far too long'

"ROOT AND branch reform" of the European Commission was By SARAH SCHAEFER demanded by MPs from all sides yesterday as Tony Blair called for an entirely new sioners, should also be preframework for fighting fraud and financial irregularities in the EU. Opening his Commons statement, Mr Blair said it was "absolutely right" that the whole Commission had resigned because the inquiry report revealed a "sad catalogue of negligence and mismanage-

"It is a damning report, It catalogues in key areas a culture of complacency and lack of accountability, and in some cases nepotism, that is unacceptable. It has revealed systemic failings in the Commission which have been tolerated for far too long. It was absolutely right that the Commission resigned en masse. The president of the Commission should leave as soon as reasonably and practically possible and a new president jority of the irregularities menshould take his place," be said.

While Conservative leader, William Hague, welcomed the proposals be demanded that Sir Leon Brittan and Neil Kinnock, dulge in the anti-Europeanism the two British EU commis-

Political Reporter

vented from being appointed to the new Commission.

"While I support the idea [that] those commissioners not directly implicated by the report should serve out their terms as an interim measure, there should be a total clear-out of the existing Commission and an entirely new set of commissioners appointed," he said. Mr Hague added that there was an "even higger issue and a more important challenge" because it was time to change the whole

structure which led the Com-

mission and the EU "to do too

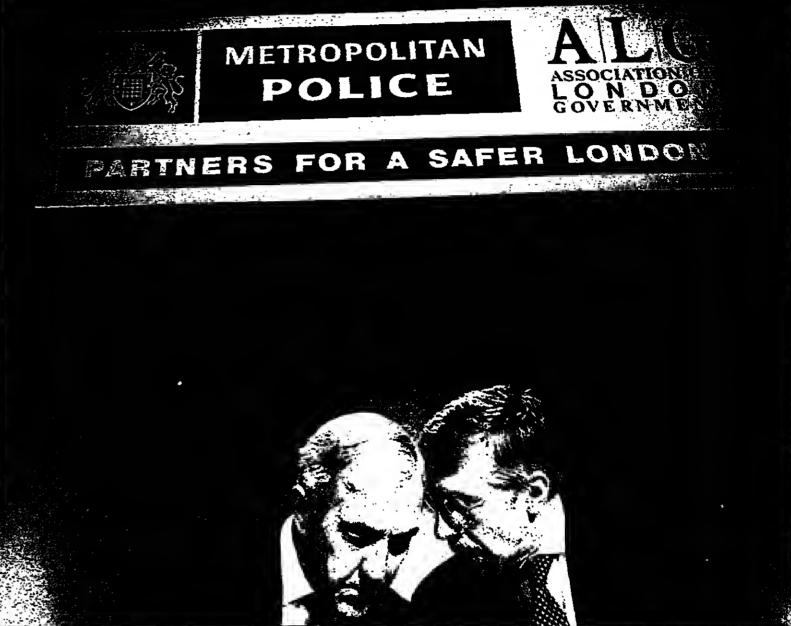
much and interfere too often". Individual countries, for example, should be able to control their fisheries while recognising the traditional rights of other countries. Replying, Mr Blair made clear that the mationed in the report happened before his own Government was elected, adding: "Do we use these events as an excuse to in-

Party or do we see it as an opportunity to drive through a reform agenda from a position of strength and influence in Britain's and Europe's interests?" John Major, the former Tory prime minister, referred to the "institutional problem" that had long existed in the EU. "The structure of the Union is such that the Commission is accountable to the Council of Ministers, but in practice the Council meets only irregularly,"

"Isn't one of the most important reforms, many years overdue, a clear-cut financial accountability by the Commission ideally to the member states of the EU or to a body that reports directly to the member states?

Sir Edward Heath, another former Tory prime minister, said it was the "first time that the European Parliament has been prepared to act and act decisively.... Things will never be the same again."

Sir Edward supported the drive for reform but warned Mr Blair against trying to "run everything", because that would arouse resentment of the present Conservative among other EU nations.



The Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, and the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, at 'Partners for a Safer London', a conference

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Police told to speed up millennium bug work

THE FOREIGN OFFICE, the TECHNOLOGY
RAF and police forces across Paul Waugh RAF and police forces across the UK have been told by the Government to improve dramatically their efforts to tackle

the millennium computer bug. Margaret Beckett, Leader of the House of Commons, said that while most public bodies had made great strides in preparing for the 2000 date change, some departments

gave serious cause for concern. With fewer than 300 days to go before the changeover, she revealed that United Kingdom embassies abroad and key Ministry of Defence agencies were not likely to be "millennium

QUESTIONS AND **ANSWERS**

Motoring costs

MORE THAN 2 million motorists who use fourstar petrol will have to pay between £200 and £400 to have their engines adjusted if they want to switch to a lead replacement fuel designed for car engines which cannot be converted to lead-free petrol, Transport minister John Reid said.

Shipping fees

DUES PAID by shipping companies for the upkeep of lighthouses, buoys and beacons are to remain unchanged at 41p per ton for 1999-2000, Transport minister Glenda Jackson

GM tests

TRIALS OF genetically modified oilseed rape have so far not revealed harmful side effects on weeds or other plant species, Environment minister Lord Whitty

Political Correspondent compliant" until as late as December.

Mrs Beckett singled out the Foreign Office and the MoD as in need of major improvement as she published the first league tables showing the progress of

The minister also attacked police forces for failure to draw up contingency plans should com-puters and other equipment be crippled by the date change. In her fifth quarterly state-

Ministers 'gone soft on fraud'

SOCIAL SECURITY By Paul Waugh

THE GOVERNMENT was accused yesterday of "going soft" on benefit fraud by cutting funds to investigators and scal-ing down national campaigns to root out criminals. The Tories claimed that Al-

istair Darling, the Secretary of State for Social Security, had also deliberately understated by half the number of arrests for fraud in order to cover up his department's failures. Iain Duncan Smith, the Tory

social security spokesman, said that the Benefits Agency security investigation service (Basis) had had to cut back its operations because it was running out of funds.

Mr Darling had stated that there had been an average of 18 arrests per month from September to December by Basis's southern command. However, the chief executive of the Benefits Agency has now directly contradicted the minister claiming that the real figure was 36 arrests per month for the region. Investigators said that bad plummeted to 16 in January because their hudget ran out.

rations for the bug, Mrs Beckett announced that more than half are scheduled to be compliant : of the 46 police forces in England and Wales do not yet have busi-

ness continuity plans in place. The cost of tackling the bug within all Whitehall departments stood at £420m, a rise of 2.5 per cent on the previous

The tables show that more than half of government de-partments had finished correction work on their computer systems. The worst performers were the Ministry of Defence Procurement Executive, the Defence Evaluation and Research

November And the Foreign Office and the Royal Navy will not be bug-free until October Some agencies, such as the Vehicle Inspection Agency and Ordnance Survey, had slipped behind hy up to 18 months from original plans to achieve

Agency and the Home Office's

Forensic Science Service, which, 7

only by December. The RAF is

the slowest of the armed ser-

vices and won't be ready until

full compliance. A Cabinet Office source said some departments would be told they had to "do a damn sight

Strikes on Iraq MPs FROM all sides attacked military strikes on Iraq as Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett insisted that the RAF was operating under humanitarian obligations to

protect no-fly zones. Leading the concern, David Winnick, Labour MP for Walsall North, urged the Government to accept a precise limit" on bombing because "a bloodthirsty and murderous regime like Saddam's will not be brought down by bombing".

Awaiting trial MINISTERS WERE urged by

Anne McIntosh. Conservative MP for Vale of York, to introduce a legal time limit on how long people awaiting trial in England and Wales can be remanded in custody. Her Prevention of Delay in Trials Bill, which has crossparty support, would set a limit of 110 days hetween

indictment and trial

Lords reform MPS WERE poised to vote overwhelmingly for the third reading of House of Lords reform last night with Commons leader, Margaret Beckett, hailing the aboli-tion of hereditaries' voting

more" to improve performance. THE HOUSE



rights as a "prize worth securing in its own right". In future they would be free to serve "in just the same way and on just the same terms as all their fellow citizens" without a reserved place in the country's public service, she said.

Today's Agenda Commons, 9.30am for

backbench debates: The Greening Government initiative: maritime and coastguard agency; bealth and .. safety at Northern Ireland soccer grounds; economic decline in suburban areas; regulation of water charges. 2.30pm: Cabinet Office questions; Prime Minister's questions; Tax Credits Bill, remaining stages; short de-

Lords, 2.30pm: Backbench debates; the need to maintain respect for Parliament the situation in Nagorno-

bate on public services de-

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Chris Burden testing one of the planes from his piece "when robots rule the world; the two minute airplane factory" which is to open in the Tate tomorrow

Andrew Buurme

Tate turns profit-making into art-form

ART AND science have finally BY DAVID LISTER come together, with mammon right in the middle.

The Tate Gallery is about to make one of its most radical breaks yet with the concept of what is art. The Tate's Duveen galleries, which used to hold Rodin's sculpture The Kiss, will from tomorrow house an assembly line making model

.The assembly line will manufacture rubber-band powered model aeroplanes from tissue paper, plastic and balsa wood parts. The planes will come off the production line at the rate of one every two minutes, fly up, circle and descend. Twenty-five thousand will be . produced over the four-month run of the exhibition.

free to fly them from the steps of the gallery.
The exhibition "When Ro-

bots Rule: The Two-Minute Airplane Factory" is the work of the 52-year-old American artist and painted in the morning. An Chris Burden, whose aim is to demystify science.

But is it art? Most certainly, says the Tate curator Frances Morris. "At the end of the century you are free to examine the great questions without pro-

a free spirit. And there is a dark side being explored. Aeroplanes are liberating. But they are also instruments of mass destruction. It won't take you long before a work like this begins to echo the Blitz: dozens of planes cascading from the front steps of the Tate on to the Jackson Pollock ticket-buyers."

Chris Burden says: "I want people to understand these processes. Do you know how your telephone or television works? What I really want is for this exhibition to be a real to land on the gallery floor," model of industrial capitalism. We have built a machine. It makes a product. We are selling the product for £5. Then Each will be on sale to the comes a magic moment when public at £5. And visitors will be every plane you sell makes a profit. And that's art too. It's beautiful." He added: "Artists and scientists used to be the same people; you looked through your telescope at night astronaut in America said recently that Nasa had made a very great error. They should have sent painters and musicians to simply look out of the window and digest what it means to go into outer space."

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Eton pupil died in 'fainting game'

AN ETON College pupil died By KATHY MARKS when he hanged himself in a "fainting game" that was played virtually every night between suppertime and prayers at the private school, an inquest heard yesterday.

The inquest recorded a verdict of misadventure on Nicholas Taylor, 15, of Esher, Surrey, who was found hanging from a dressing gown cord in his room last month.

Nicholas's friends told the East Berkshire coroner, Robert Wilson, that they had seen groups of boys playing the game - which involved tying lig-atures around each other's necks to make them faint - hundreds of times.

The pupil who discovered his body said that Nicholas had been "fainted" by friends almost every night. "It was just something to do," said the boy, who cannot he named for legal rea-

from it when we came round." A post-mortem examination concluded that Nicholas died of asphyxia in his room at the school, where pupils include Princes William and Harry:

His parents, Malcolm and Liz Taylor, attended the inquest at the Guildhall, Windsor, but were too upset to speak Mr Wilson said he had strug-

gled to understand what had gone through Nicholas's mind. I have been in this court for 28 years and I thought I had heard everything," he said.
This fainting game was tak-

ing place between boys who are some of the cream of our society, who are probably also of ove average intelligence. Why? What words spring to mind - crazy mad stupid?"

"faint" himself, but had no intention of taking his own life. He added: "I find it difficult to criticise Eton College. Yes,

they had an absolute duty of

care, but there is only so much 'I shall go away, the boys will go back to college and the college will return to its normal self. The incident will be put behind everyone, save Mr and

Mrs Taylor, who have lost a son in tragic circumstances." One of Nicholas's friends said: "There were about six or seven faintings each evening. Other pupils said that

Nicholas seemed to take par-

ticular pleasure in the game when he was under pressure. The housemaster of Baidwins Bec. Robert Topham, said the game had been kept a secret from school authorities: "It

that Nicholas had tried to clever boy who does not want to get eaught may well not get caught doing something that may be inappropriate or wrong," he said.

Another of Nicholas's friends said Nicholas had tried to perform it on himself on a previous occasion: "Nick was standing by the door with my dressing gown cord," he said "He said: 'If no one is going to do it to me, then I'll do it to myself ' He put the dressing gown cord around his neck."

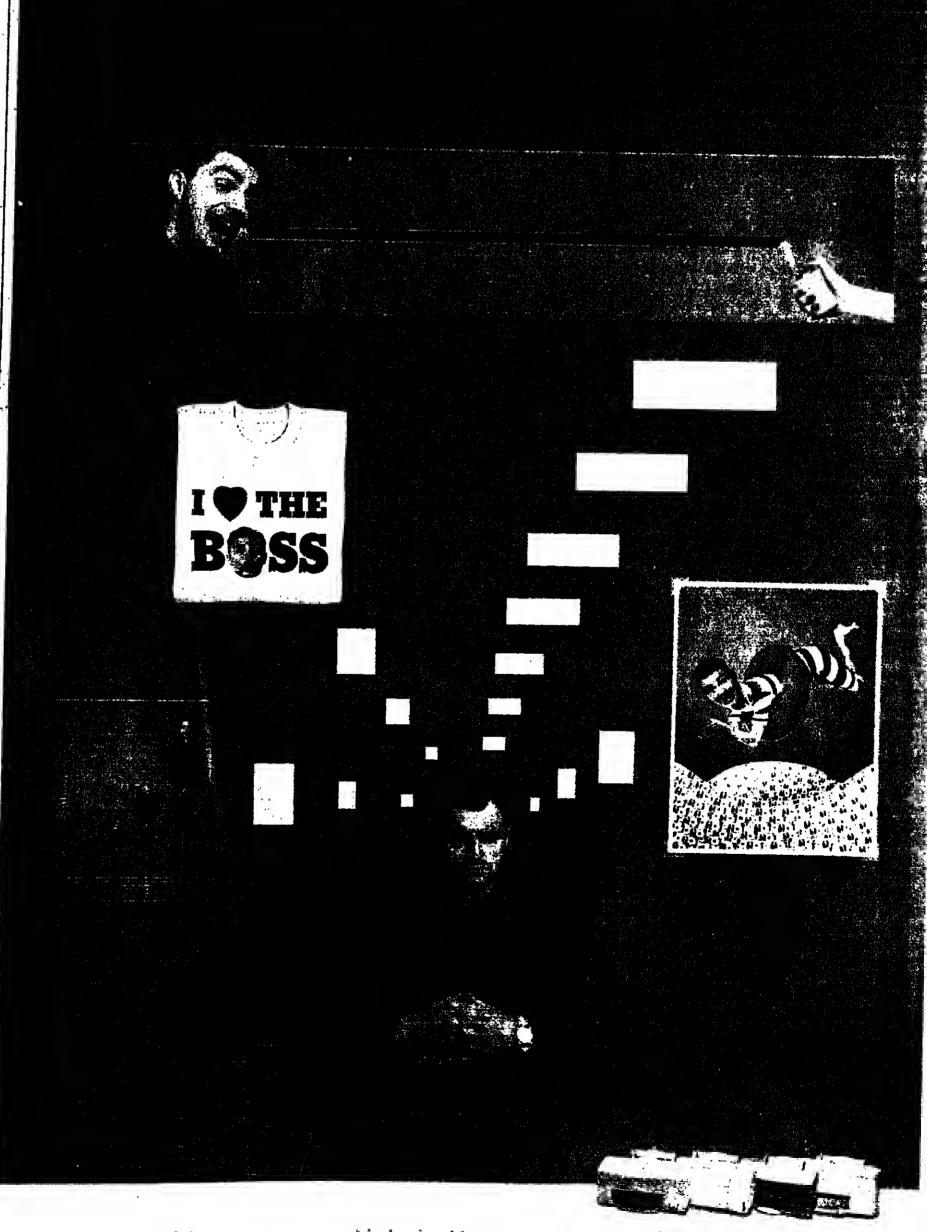
Another boy said that the person being "fainted" would tap on someone's thigh as the cord was pulled. When he stopped tapping, that was the signal for them to stop.

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Describing versions of the game, he said: "If you hug someone really hard and then they stand up, all the blood rushes to their head and they



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Parenting: Research stresses importance of father-son relationships, as number of babies conceived inside marriage falls



of the participants in the survey, which found emotional support from father figures is crucial to boys

Boys are suffering from 'Dad Deficit'

BOYS WITH low self-esteem BY CLARE GAENER suffer from "Dad Deficit" - a a survey published yesterday.

Lack of paternal involvement is linked to a son's poor opinion of himself, his "antischool" attitudes and a tendency to get into trouble with the police, the nationwide survey of 1,400 boys between tha ages of 13 and 19 indicated.

However, it is unclear which comes first - the low selfesteem or the "Dad Deficit". Independent research suggests that fathers find it easier to be close to sons who they perceive as successful and that their increased interest feeds into the

Researchers measured the level of interaction between

low level of emotional support fathers and sons by how much from their fathers, according to time they spend together, how much interest the father pays to the son's schoolwork, and to what extent the father is willing to talk through the son's

> At one end of the scale was the "Dad Deficit" (DD) and, at the other extreme, the "Highly Involved Man" (HIM), whose supportive influence proved disproportionately positive.

HIM fathering was as effec-tive regardless of whather the man lived at home or was the biological father

Adrienne Katz, the author of the study, "Leading Lads", wants to encourage men who come into contact with boys, be they fathers, teachers, youth

workers or sports coaches, to be more aware of their respousibility. "Men don't seem to understand the power of their be felt most keenly by those input," she said yesterday. "Boys are much less likely to turn to a friend than girls and so they need emotional support from the family. If a father models behaviour which never

talks about feelings, it is hard for a boy to seek help if he's de-pressed or troubled." The study showed that HIM . fathering protects against depression and even suicide. According to the Samaritans, suicide attempts by young men have increased by 118 per cent

in the past 10 years. In 1996, 547 young men took their lives, compared with 157

One of the most striking findings of the "Leading Lads" study was the extent to which boys put up barriers to avoid getting help. However, boys with highly involved fathers were less likely than "Dad Deficit" sons to believe that boys are expected to cope with problems on their own.

man should act and what boys do or do not do were found to boys with the poorest selfimage. They are also most likely to have fathers who tell

them, "boys don't cry". Boys are inclined to protect their parents by keeping the problems to themselves. They know that their fathers want to be proud of them and believe that to tell them they are not

As one interviewee, Danny Evans, 17, from north London, put it: "Boys have a secret second life on the inside and a shell outside... Every father wants to be proud of his son, enforcing definitions of what these children should be - and it's doing harm. Some people are dying inside but too scared to admit

As the "Leading Lads" survey was conducted only over one year it was unable to establish whether there is a causal link between low self-

Unmarried conceive half of all babies

HALF OF all conceptions now BY LINUS GREGORIADIS take place outside marriage compared with just over a third in 1986, according to govern-ment statistics published yesterday.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that out of just under 800,000 women who conceived in England and Wales in 1997, 400,000 were wamarried. In 1986, by comparison, 305,000 conceptions out of a total of 819,000 took place outside marriage.

Under-age pregnancies fell by 5 per cent in 1997 to 8.9 conceptions per thousand girls aged 13-15, compared with 9.4 per thousand in 1996. Overall, teenage conception rates fell by 1 per cent over the same period, according to the spring issue of Population Trends,

the publication of the ONS. Despite this fall, the figures show that the United Kingdom has the highest number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 out of eight European countries studied by the ONS.

In 1997 there were 30 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 in the UK, compared with 21 per 1,000 in Portugal and 17 per 1,000 in the Republic of Ireland. The report shows a large

increase in the number of women over 35 conceiving in the period since 1991.

In 1997 there were 41.2 con-

35-39, and 8.7 conceptions per

1,000 among women aged 40 and over - the only two age groups to register an increase in fertility rates since 1996.

Karen Dunnell, co-editor of the report, said she thought the rise in conceptions was the result of improved educational prospects for women.

She said: "The proportion of women who gain educational qualifications is rising, and their economic activity rates are rising relative to young men's - this is probably one of the main reasons."

The report also found that two-thirds of total conceptions outside marriage resulted in motherhood, compared with more than 90 per cent of con-

ceptions within marriage. The number of people cohabiting in England and Wales will double by 2021, according to the ONS. About 1.56 million unmarried couples were living together in 1996, a figure expected to rise to nearly 3 mil-

lion within 25 years. The ONS estimates the most dramatic increase in numbers of cohabiting couples will take place among the over-35s. It is estimated that by 2006 less than half of all adults will be married.

Divorce rates dropped in 1997, with 146,339 decrees absolute in England and Wales, ceptions per 1,000 women aged 6.6 per ceot fewer than in 1996.

John Peel wins top radio award

ONE OF Radio 4's most con- By Paul McCann troversial new programmes received an award yesterday when John Peel was named radio broadcaster of the year by the Television and Radio Industries Club.

Peel, 60, who received an OBE for services to broadcasting last year, won the award for his Saturday morning programme Home Truths. The programme, a light-hearted look at domestic life, was slated by critics of Radio 4's new schedule as a programme "about nothing" when it launched last year.

"I am jolly pleased to have won," Peel said at the award ceremony in London yesterday. "Initially the programme

Media Editor

of breath in some quarters at the thought of a Radio 1 DJ coming over to Radio 4." Another winner was Trevor

McDonald who was named newscaster of the year for his work on ITN's now-defunct News at Ten programme. In his acceptance speech McDonald criticised Channel 5

for moving its evening news to 6pm and running an advertising campaign claiming that his new 6.30 ITV bulletin repeated Channel 5's stories.

Johnny Vaughan, presenter of The Big Breakfast, was named commercial television broadcaster of the year, while was cited as a classic example. The Big Breakfast itself was of Radio 4 'dumbing down'. I named Channel 4 programme think there was a sharp intake of the year.



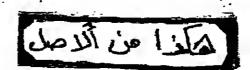


The politics of Europe are now almost impossible to control



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Plan to cure fear of maths at school

TEACHERS SHOULD organise desks in a U-shape and sing Education Editor Five Little Specded Frogs with their five-year-olds, according to new government guidelines on how to teach maths.

More mental arithmetic and fewer calculators form the centrepiece of plans to banish the fear of maths and turn Britain into a more numerate nation.

The 117-page guidance represents the most detailed government advice ever sent to schools on maths teaching methods. From September a new daily numeracy hour will be introduced in primary schools.

Even the arrangement of the furniture is important, the document suggests. It proposes placing desks in a U-shape with the weakest children sitting in the centre of the U.

The guidelines suggest that four and five-year-olds in reception classes might sing Five Little Speckled Frogs before counting frogs and hily pads in the sand and water trays. Yesterday's document says

teachers should spend the first five or 10 minutes of the nnmeracy hour on oral work and mental arithmetic, the next 30 or 40 minutes on a new topic or practising an old one, and the last 10 to 15 minutes summing up to the whole class, During the mental arith-

metic sessions pupils might play a number game in which they are asked to give examples of a number one less than a multiple of five, or a calculation with the answer 12. Pupils should have the men-

tal arithmetic skills to work out different ways of answering questions such as 81 minus 26 or 5 per cent of £3000.

Calculators, the document says, should not normally be used for under-eights but older children should be taught how best to use these "powerful and efficient tools".

The guidelines advise teachers to spend as much time as possible teaching and questioning the whole class instead of dividing them into groups.

Mr Blunkett told a London conference yesterday: "Too many people in Britain say with almost a badge of pride that they never did understand maths properly. Yet it is essential in everyday life and to the life of our economy. Dealing with figures should be just as important as the ability to read, yet maths is sometimes the poor relation. We want to promote a 'can-do' attitude towards maths across the community."

Tony Blair announced that next year will be Maths Year 2000, and Carol Vorderman, the mental arithmetic expert from Channel 4's Countdown programme has agreed to give the initiative her backing.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said that "in principle the maths hour represents sound educational practice" but warned against over prescription. "Schools already succeeding

should not be compelled to turn their maths teaching upside-down to accommodate the bureaucrats at the Department for Education and Employment who, once again, appear to be rampaging out of control"

COUNTING ON BRAIN POWER

Mental arithmetic strategies for 11-year-olds:

Use related facts and doubling:

Explain how to find sixths and twelfths by halving

one-twelfth of 300 is 25. (one-third of 300 is 100, half is 50, half again is 25)

Continue to multiply a two-digit number by a single-digit number, multiplying the tens first: $= 86 \times 7 = (80 \times 7) + (6 \times 7)$ = 560 + 42

= 602

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£1m deal tempts nuns to evict carer



A "CARING" order of Irish nuns By BARRIE CLEMENT has chosen today - St Patrick's Day - for an act that is apparently lacking in charity to one of their compatriots.

The Poor Servants of the Mother of God are seeking an eviction order at Lambeth County Court, in south London, against arguably one of their most faithful servants.

If they are successful, Josephine Cregan, who has been a care worker for the order for 20 years, will have to leave her tied cottage in Streatham, south London, because the nuns are selling their residential home for people with learning difficulties.

The site is likely to fetch more than firm, thus turning the Poor Servants of the Mother of God into the "Comfortably Off Servants of the Mother of God, as Frank Minal, an official with the GMB general workers' union, puts it.

Ms Cregnn, 43, was first of-fered statutory minimum redundancy pay of 14,180 - a figure which was uxcreased by eight week's pay - £1,760 - after the intervention of the GMB. It fore tuday's hearing.

Labour Editor

is understood that it was then raised by £3,000, and vesterday by a further £1,000 after the involvement of The Independent. Thus, after two decades of look ing after disadvantaged people for the nuns. Ms Cregan could lose her job and her home, with

£10,000 compensation. "I was offered another job," said Ms Cregan, "but it was on less money and with no accommodation. I have given my life to the order. I think I've

been treated very hadly." Letters to Ms Cregan from the order give her notice to quit and remand her that her contract states that her accommodation lasts only as long as the job.

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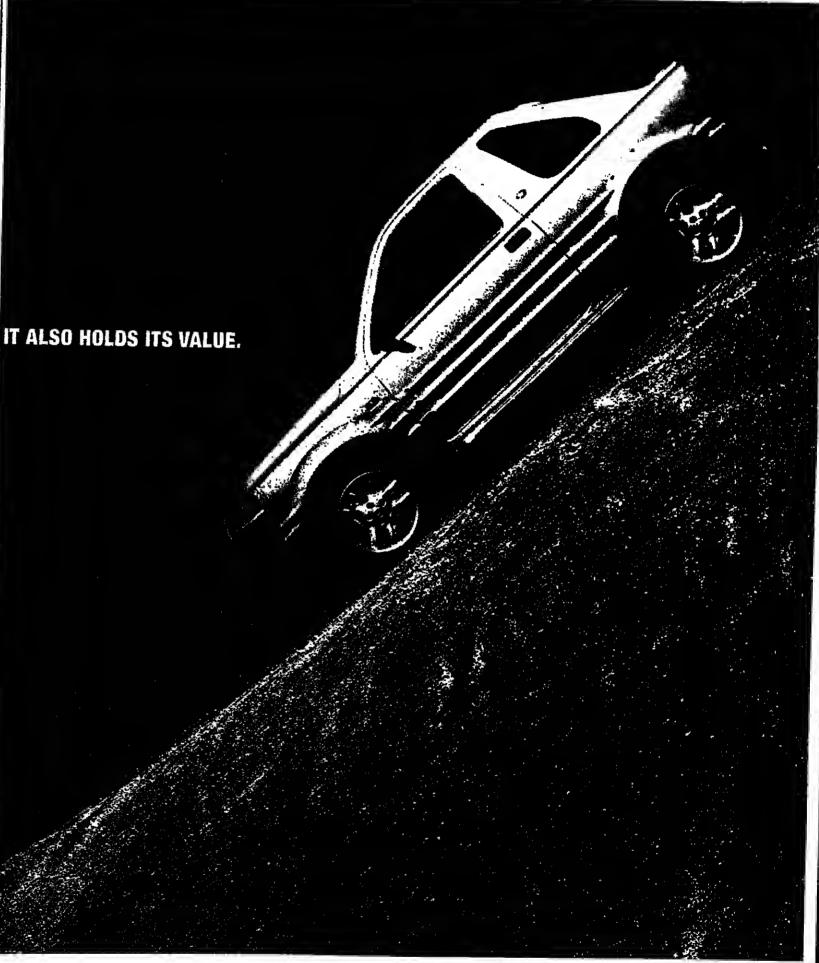
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A spokesman for the or-der's solicitors said Ms Cregan had been offered another job and temporary accommodation but she had refused. He said she was asking for a "five figure" redundancy payment which no charity could countenance. Every effort would be made to reach a settlement be-



A NEW FREELANCER FROM £199 A MONTH:

Glass's Guide (February 1999), no other 4x4 holds its than a Freelander. And that's not just because it's made r. Nor is it just because of the way It combines car-like h astonishing off-road capabilities, provided in part by Hill Descent Control technology^a (see picture).

the comprehensive 3 year warranty.44 It's also because ility (ogle picture).

in fact that it drove off with What Car? magazine's ar" award last year. Unheard of for a 4x4.

e it holds its value so well, monthly repayments f ter are unexpectedly low (raise eyebrows at panel)

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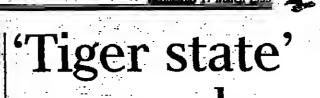
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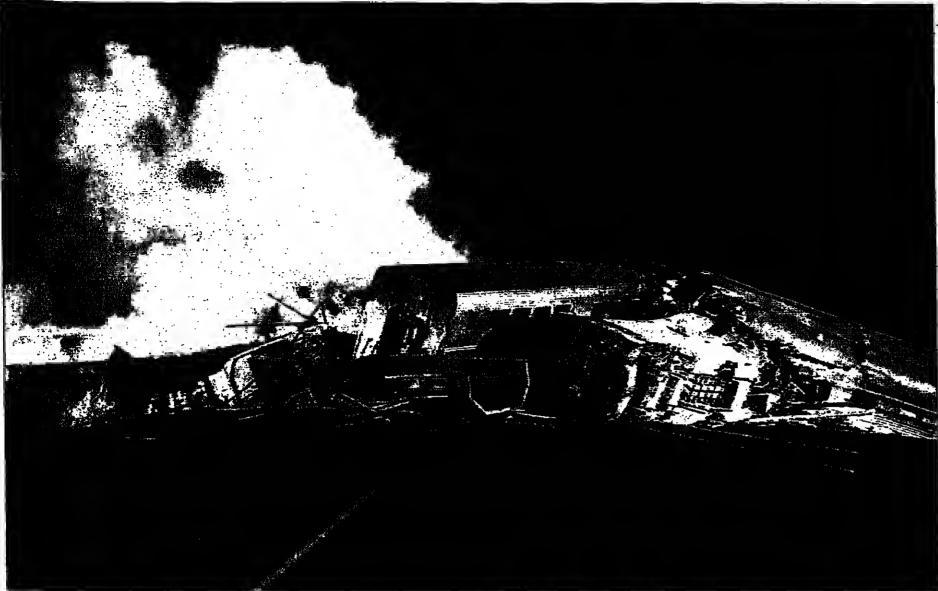
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Rescue workers searching wreckage from the train after it collided with a truck on a level crossing in Illinois. Ten passengers were unaccounted for John Zich/EPA

Thirteen die in US train crash

RESCUE WORKERS were yesterday searching the wreckage of an Amtrak passenger train that collided with a lorry carrying steel, killing at least 13 people. Another 100 were in-

jured, some seriously, The collision occurred on Monday night at a level crossing in Illinois, 50 miles south of Chicago. Many of those killed and injured were settling into their beds in a sleeper car, near the head of the train that was making the overnight journey from Chicago to New Orleans. The impact sent car-

BY DAVID USBORNE in New York

riages and engines careening off the tracks, Some carriages were concertinged to a fraction of their size and one of the engines was split in two.

"All of a sudden, everything just started crashing and catching on fire and people hollering and running. It was awful," said Blanche Jones, one of the passengers. "We were trying to get out. We couldn't find a way out. That was the most devastating thing of all."

Working overnight, emer-gency crews pulled 13 bodies from the train, called City of New Orleans. Officials warned however, that of the 216 who had been aboard the train, another 10 were still missing. By morning, "empty" had been spraypainted on those carriages free

Amtrak is bedevilled by problems at level crossings. There are about 250,000 of them on its tracks across the country, and not all are equipped with barriers. Of the 245 Amtrak accidents reported in 1997.

lisions with motor vehicles.

This crossing did have lights and barriers and officials were trying to determine yesterday whether they were working properly on Monday. The lorry had just left a steel plant nearby. Its cab was still intact and the driver survived the crash,

The train, which had 16 carriages in all, mostly doubledecker passenger cars, would normally have been travelling at about 80mph along the stretch of track where the accident occurred. If the driver of

about half were the result of col- the train saw the lorry, he still would have needed at least 10,000ft to halt the train.

> Rescue workers were hampered during the night by thick smoke from fires in one of the carriages and one of the engines. Officials said 101 passengers and crew were taken to nearby hospitals for treatment. Of those, 11 were listed in critical condition yesterday,

and 19 in serious condition. Only last week, Amtrak unveiled a new high-speed train. modelled on the French TGV. which will begin serving its

north-east corridor between Washington and Boston this autumn. The train will travel at speeds of more than 150mph, and Amtrak has been at pains to underline its safety.

Amtrak has struggled for years with low budgets and a patchy safety image. Its worst accident happened in September 1993, when a train en route from New Orleans to Los Angeles plunged into a river in southern Alabama after a barge struck and destroyed a bridge pier. Forty seven people died in the accident.

rescue plan loses its way

THE STATE of Madhya Pradesh Is India's Great Outdoors: the in New Delhi geographical heart of the country, where you can drive for hours through sparsely populated and relatively unspoiled

In the middle of the state is the 1,000sq km Kanha National Park, where Kipling set the Jungle Book. And Shere Khan's descendants are still numerous here; the state has more than 900 tigers in the wild, about onethird of the Indian total and perhaps one-fifth of all the remaining wild tigers in the

leased yesterday in Delhi by the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), a London-based non-governmental organisation, that heritage is being frittered away at a terrifying rate.

The enemies are the tiger's usual adversaries: poachers supplying the oriental medicine trade in the Far East; industrialists building plants to strip out what remain of the state's natural resources; corrupt officials, winking at large-scale

This is the sad tale not only across India but also in the other "range states" where tigers survive in the wild, including Sumatra, Thailand and Russian Siberia, But the EIA chose to highlight Madhya Pradesh because in 1994 the state government, prompted by a vigorous minister of the environment with a constituency here, decided to name it "the Tiger State". The animal would be a symbol of efforts to conserve the natural resources.

At the outset much was promised. A "tiger state committee" was set up to improve the performance of the wildlife wardens. A "tiger cell" headed by a highly motivated inspector of police, Mr Rajgopal, cracked down on poachers and traders. Mr Rajgopal believed one tiger per week was being killed in the change, and the first step tostate, and one leopard per day. wards addressing it," he said.

Five years on, however, the EIA judgement is that "what started as a positive and enthusiastic initiative has been exposed as nothing more than a public-relations exercise". The state government, according to the report's authors, is "bent on exploiting its remaining natural resources to the detriment of the tiger, the forests, and the people who depend on them".

The bold initiatives have run into the sand. Inspector Rajgopal, too effective for his own good, has been transferred. The only recommendation of the tiger committee to have been implemented was putting a fax machine into the wildlife wardens' office. The fundraising Tiger State Foundation Society has amassed a grand total of 35,000 rupees - about £500. The report says: "It is not known what this money has been used for."

Meanwhile, the abuses flourish. A diamond mine operated by the national government near the border of Panna Tiger Reserve pumps solid waste and slurry from the mine into streams. A natural corridor between two reserves, vital for the tigers' genetic resilience, has been put at risk by a huge timber fraud: 300,000 apparently healthy sal trees have been felled after it was claimed that a beetle epidemic was raging. Tigers continue to be poached. supplying a trade which, the report says, "is more organised than ever before".

Amidst the gloom, Dave Currie, founding director of the EIA, identified one chink of light; there has been a change of attitude at the level of the Indian central government. "There is now utter acceptance at central government level of the seriousness of the crisis. That is a very major



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hitch in strategy - faded just a little. "Yes, it's rejected." he muttered. "Our people clearly said what they think about it." And there we had it - predictably, another hig "no" from Slobodan Milosevic. Equally predictably, Nato threats will follow. Indeed, even as the Serbs and Albanians were packing up for the night, there were ru-Robin Cook would soon be re-

ZIMBABWE IS reported to have BY ALEX DUVAL SMITH lost a battalion of between 80 in Johannesburg

Congo, where foreign-backed babwe has lost so many rebels are fighting to overtroops in weekend fighting near throw the regime of President the southern town of Kabinda will come as a serious blow The reports drew a stiff deto President Robert Mugabe. nial from Harare, which has At home, his support for Presbeen militarily involved since ident Kabila is seen as costly the beginning of the eightand self-serving.

The fight over who will control the Democratic Republic of However, the claim that Zim-Congo - a country the size of

Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and Chad against Tutsi rebels supported by Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi.

Hutu guerrillas from Rwanda and Burundi and Mai-Mai warriors drawn from a mixture of Bantu tribes are also fighting the Tutsi rebels.

President Kabila, sensing that he is losing international sympathy, was reported to have

Western Europe - pits Presi-dent Kabila and his allies in damned" in Washington. Edward von Kloberg, whose task will be to swing United States opinion away from the Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni was hired by President Kabila

Zimbabwe loses battalion as Congo war spreads

for a reported annual fee of \$500,000 (£312,000). Mr Von Kloberg's previous clients have included the late Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu and the Iraqi leader,

Saddam Hussein. He also ad-

vised Zaire's former dictator southern Africa. Critics say Mobutu Sese Seko, whom Mr they are only defending their Kabila overthrew in 1997.

In a statement, Mr Von Kloberg said: "Mr Kabila, like his predecessor, Mr Mobutu, is now struggling to keep together a country the size of Western Europe with more than 400 ethnic groups and dialects and nearly 50 million people."

President Kabila's allies claim they are preventing the "Balkanisation" of central and own business interests.

Meanwhile, the conflict appeared to have spilt over into a ninth country yesterday as it was reported that up to 7,000 refugees from Congo had arrived in Zambia.

The country has a 600-mile border with Congo. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said some 7,000 people had crossed the bor-

March Yesterday it said 900 had agency, Misna, reported that

Zambia was previously the only country with an extensive land border not to be involved in the war. Last week, however, it admitted it had allowed fuel supplies to reach President Kabila's forces, It said these

have now been stopped. Meanwhile, the only organisation continuing to monitor human rights in Congo, the

der since the beginning of Catholic missionary news arrived in the space of one hour - robels last week massacred more than 100 civilians in the eastern province of Sud-Kiva.

Misna said the rebels massacred civilians in several villages including Mazoco. Lutunda, Kenge, Lulimba and Kabukungu, and in two districts of Kamituga. The attacks were denied by the rebels' nulitary chief, Commander Jean-Pierre Ondekane

Serbs stall at talks and call West's bluff

AH, THOSE teeth. And that BY ROBERT FISK smile. Even the grey suit glimmered in the evening light. A bit like Liberace, but Milan Milutinovic's smile, glimpsed between the forests of television cameras and heaving pressmen, went on just a little bit too long; like his speech, repeated over and over as be marched towards his official car in the rue Kleber. "We are ready to sign a political agreement, but ...

On Monday, the first day of the reconvened Paris talks on the future of Kosovo, the ethnic Albanians had agreed to an international peace plan granting them autonomy but not independence, and the introduction of Nato troops on the ground to ensure observance by all sides Yesterday, however, the

"buts" came thick and fast as the bodyguards and journalists and policemen fought each other for space in the great amoeba-like trail of Serbia's president. But, of course, the Kosovo Albanians had to accept all of Serbia's "complaints". Yes, the Serbs were ready for implementation. But only for the political agreement. And the entry of 38,000 Nato troops to oversee the new peace?

in Paris



Milutinovic: 'It's rejected'

turning to Paris to set yet more deadlines and propose more possible air strikes.

General Cook's ADC, Captain Hubert Vedrine, the French Foreign Minister, was already accusing the Serbs of backtracking, "The very last moment has not yet come," he told the National Assembly yesterday in words that might have been scripted by his British superior officer. "The last word has not really been uttered. But the moment of truth voice - like that of an army of nounced their preparedness to

> "They will sign the Bible and the Koran if you ask them now," a Serb journalist confided at the police barrier in the rue Kleber "Milosevic's guys have handed out a 20-page document of 'complaints' that tears up the original agreement."
> And so they had. The Serbs didn't like the judicial system proposed for Kosovo and supposedly agreed by all at last month's Rambouillet talks.

They didn't want Kosovo to have its own president. But if only the Kosovars would accept those 20 pages of amendments. the Serbs would go along with the revised (and thus worthless) "political agreement".

thinking. Take Dragoljub Oj-danic, for example, the Yugoslav chief of staff. Or Rade Markovic, the head of Serbia's of the Serb delegation in Paris; they remain behind in Belgrade as part of Mr Milosevic's decreasing inner circle. Are recommending a little bombing British members of Nato's extraction force in Macedonia patrol at Skopje yesterday as they wait for a peace mission to Kosovo

In the rue Kleber, they were even saying that the whole panjandrum might close down as soon as tonight, leaving a few days for General Cook and versee the new peace? is not far." The Kosovars pre-days for General Cook and ferred to remain silent. Wisely Captain Vedrine to make some second. But Mr Milutinovic's so. They had, after all, an more of their famous threats and persuade an American -Albright, perhaps - to make "one last journey for peace" to Belgrade. As we all know, the Americans are ready to shout "chocks away". And the British too, up to a point. But the Germans and the Italians and the French, and just about everybody else, is beginning to won-

> bombs start to fall. No wonder Mr Milutinovic had such a broad smile.

What we don't know, however is what the real generals are

secret police. They are not part they advising their master that Nato is still bluffing? Or are they from Nato to stiffen the Serbian backbone - and perhaps provide a get-out clause for Milosevic to hand over Kosovo? Or are they - and here's the rubassuring their leader that the Yugoslav air force might be able, in the event of a Nato offensive, to do a little Argentinestyle damage to Nato's Adriatic

Kosovo dissidents reject deal THE KOSOVO Albanians' agree- BY EMMA DALY ment to the Western peace in Ljubovac plan for the province was Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) "It is easy for them to accept a compromise and present that

as their big victory, because it was not their friends who were killed and whose last message was that we should fight to the end," said a statement from the KLA zone of Podujevo. der what happens after the

The Podujevo region, close to the border with Serbia proper, is under the command of

thrown into doubt yesterday "Remi". Last month he told ternational monitoring mission in Kosovo, that he would never disarm his forces, even though

the peace deal required it. Yugoslav troops continued their military offensive in Kosovo yesterday, concentrating on the triangle of land between Vucitrn, Srbica and Mitrovica, and forcing KLA rebels to withdraw from the area. After they captured the village of Vrbnica,

huge plumes of smoke were vis-

Glogovac, where they hope to Their fears were heightened by reports that a column of

ablaze. Tank shells crashed already moved into Srbica, coloured jackets, hats and into the villages of Ljubovac, Osknown in Albanian as

we deard a drive westwards, aimed at had moved into Skenderaj," subdoing the KLA heartlands said Basri Nura, who was on the border with Albania. driving a tractor pulling a The action threatens dozens of trailer in which his mother and Albanian villages in the east of three sisters huddled under Kosovo and yesterday hun-dreds of civilians began the an old, grev blanket. Several more tractors trek west out to Srbica and

moved along the muddy road. past groups of people walking out. Elheme Bardiqi and two friends were moving their 15 children to a safer village, the Serbian armoured vehicles, children bundled up against

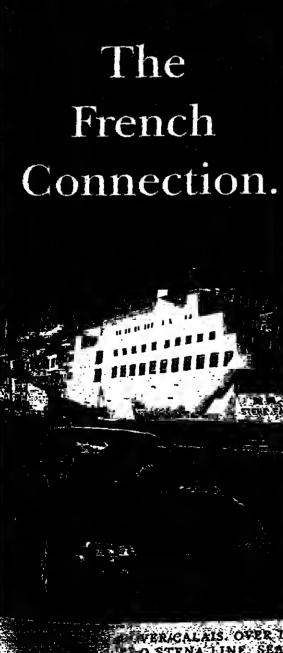
ible as huildings were set including seven T-72 tanks, had the biting wind in brightly Mrs Bardiqi said: "We want-

> ed to escape with the children because they were frightened - they were crying when they heard the shelling." The rebel fighters fear that the civilians fleeing their

villages may end up trapped if the Yugoslav tanks in Srbica join the pincer movement. "We are trying to let the

civilians know it [Schica] is not a good situation [for them]." said one fighter. "But we have to fight somewhere."





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Seventh **IOC** man may be sacked

BY PAUL LASHMAR

THE OLYMPIC movement's second most powerful figure may face expulsion when the International Olympic Committee begins its emergency meeting in Switzerland today.

The IOC's investigating team has been examining new evidence against Un Yong Kim, a South Korean. He would be the seventh member upon whose sacking the full committee will decide.

The inquiry commission headed by the vice-president Dick Pound, of Canada, met yesterday after receiving "some letters and documents". Until the Salt Lake City bribery scandal broke last December Mr Kim, 67, was expected to take over in 2001 from the president, Juan Samaranch,

In Mr Pound's second report, published last week, there were three allegations against Mr Kim. According to the report, be had elicited favours for two of his children and a Russian teenager from the Salt Lake City committee which was bidding for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games. The commission recommended that Mr Kim received "the most serious of warnings".

Six other members were recommended for expulsion: Agustin Arroyo of Ecuador, Jean-Claude Ganga of Congo. Zein El Abdin Abdel Gadir of Sudan, Lamine Keita of Mali, Sergio Santander of Chile and Samoa's Paul Wallwork

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Rain, rain, rain all winter – and it could last 20 years

IN THE Pacific North-west, they are used to rain. It is what makes the forests lush and green. It is what keeps more Californians from upping sticks and moving there. Rain is what they know. Rain is what they can handle.

So when it rained uninterruptedly for almost the whole of February, the citizens of Oregon and Washington kept a brave face. When the weather forecasters pointed out that the rain has been relentless since early November, and threatens to stay that way until May, there were mur-murs of dismay, certainly, but nothing to upset the prevailing

Then, a few days ago, came the proverbial raindrop too far. A particularly ugly storm accompanied by high winds played havoc with the electricity supply toppled trees and - horror of horrors knocked out the coffee service on a commuter ferry plying the thin strip of Puget Sound from "Of course people com**AMERICAN TIMES** PACIFIC NORTH-WEST

plained," said Susan Harris-Huether, spokeswoman for Washington state's ferry services. "If they don't get their

And now North-westerners are venting their anguish in the only ways they know how - blaming the forces of evil in the world (California, mainly) and cracking jokes.

Like the one about the realises that it has not stopped raining for a week. So she stops a kid on the street and asks: "Hey, does it ever stop raining around here?" To which he answers: "I wouldn't know. I'm only six."

The truth is, the region has gone through the wettest winter since records began. Barely one day in five has

been dry over the past three months. There have been mudslides and floods on the roads. Up in the Cascade mountains, they had to close

down resorts while they spent two days digging chairlifts out

of the snow. Most spectacularly, an oil tanker crashed ashore in southern Oregon a month ago, spilling around 70,000 gallons of oil, killing birds and threatening shellfish stocks. Because of the relentless

storms, salvage crews have found it almost impossible to woman who visits Seattle and stop the ship, the New Carisso, from drifting and causing more damage. Ten days ago, a huge tugboat tried to tow the wreckage and its remaining cargo of 130,000 gallons of oil offshore for a deep-sea burial. But one of the towing bridles snapped and the ship's carcass was washed back to shore.

According to meteorologists, this winter could be the harbinger of a general change for the worse. The North-west is subject to weather movements called Pacific decadal oscillations, and a 20-year pe-

riod of relative dryness may be giving way to a wet period that is likely to last for just as long. On top of that is La Nina, the Pacific current pattern that pushed last year's Californian storms several hundred miles

Republicans have sought to lay the poor climate at the door of the Democratic state administration, saying a lot of "liberal hot air" has played havoc with the environment. And former governor Mike Lowry, for one, seems willing to accept the blame.

want more wetlands," be said. "And I'm getting them right outside in the parking lot."

Some, of course, see divine totervention in all those rainclouds. Retribution, perhaps. for excessive exploitation of the beautiful landscape. Or, as the former Seattle deputy mayor Boh Royer sees it, God's scheme to put those uppity Californians in their place. "This is the only way to get all those newcomers to move back south," he said. ANDREW GUMBEL



Driving through flooded roads has become a way of life in parts of rain-drenched Oregon

WINNIGPED

New research can help you reduce the odds.

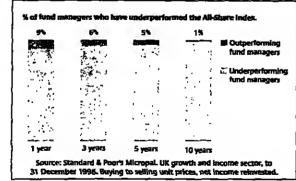
Trawling through the financial pages for your last PEP is a bit like entering a crowded bazaar with store holders shouting at you from all angles. Who do you buy from? The one who shouts the loudest or the one that 'promises' you the best deal?

Ideally, before making such a decision you'll want the added confidence and reassurance that can only come from a truly impartial and credible source. That's why we asked The WM Company, one of the world's leading investment performance consultants, to shine an independent light on the key issues.

If you can spare five minutes to read their findings, we promise it will make the task of choosing your last PEP considerably easier. We start with a remarkable fact that has led to one of the biggest debates ever in the investment industry, and which triggered the research...

THE INDUSTRY'S BEST KEPT SECRET

Before we entered the PEP market, we looked at the hundreds of PEPs on offer and discovered that less than one in ten actively managed funds outperformed the FT-SE Actuaries' All-Share Index of the top 828 UK companies - the industry benchmark for performance.



'Tracker' funds, which simply track their chosen index by investing in all the companies that make it up, are not new. But before Virgin's high profile launch four years ago, trackers accounted for only a tiny part of the UK investment market. Why, you might ask?

A TRULY OBJECTIVE VIEW

It's this issue that we asked WM to consider. After all, the first decision you need to make when choosing your PEP is whether to go for a tracker fund or to try to find an active fund manager who can beat it.

WM studied the performance of funds in the UK Growth & Income sector over 20 years to the end of 1998. These funds can be directly compared with the FT-SE All-Share Index.



They found that in any five year period, active funds had around a one in four chance of outperforming a tracker. Over longer periods, they fared even worse.

These figures take into account annual management charges but not the initial charges levied by active funds. Allowing for all charges reduces the odds still further and it's easy to see

The average actively managed PEP has total charges over a five year period of 11.5% (source: Best PEP). Compare this with a typical tracker fund with no initial charge and a 1% annual management charge (just 5% over five years) and it becomes clear what a tough job an active manager has on his hands. He needs to outperform the market by 6.5% just to keep pace with a tracker!

BUT ARE ACTIVE FUNDS A GAMBLE WORTH TAKING?

It would seem not. WM found, not surprisingly, that to give them a chance of outperforming trackers, active funds took on more risk. This resulted in wild fluctuations in performance which were not generally associated with higher returns. In WM's own words "active investors were not being rewarded for the extra risk."

THERE'S WORSE NEWS TO COME

Even so, many PEP investors are still willing to try and upset the odds by finding that elusive outperforming fund manager. And the generally accepted way of choosing is to look at a fund's past performance.

Virgin Direct Personal Financial Service Ltd is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority. The price of units and any Income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invest. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to the future. You can invest in a PEP right up until 5 April 1999 when they will attract the same tax benefits as the new individual Savings Account. All calls are recorded and monitored. "Source: Standard & Poor's Micropal, www.micropal.com, single investment, 6.3.95 to 22.2.99, buying to selling prices, gross income reinvested.

However, this is the area where WM's findings are most disturbing. They concluded that, as a whole, the top performing actively managed funds over a five year period had no more than a random chance of being the top performing funds over the following five year

What's more, the evidence suggested that the very poor performers actually had a better chance of being the stars of the future than the former stars themselves!

So what hope then is there for finding that elusive manager?

NARROW THE FELD

If your instinct is still to gamble, that's fine provided you're happy with the odds. If, however, you feel the risks of active management are just not worth it and trackers offer more for less, read

THE VIRGIN GROWTH PEP

- A proven approach to investment. By tracking the FT-SE Ali-Share Index, the Virgin Growth PEP has consistently remained among the top performing PEPs, month after month, year after year.
- 20% a year. Tax free. That's the average return earned by Virgin Growth PEP austomers who started investing when we launched four years ago".
- bower charges than 97% of all other PEPs. No salesmen, no commission and no expensive fund managers means no initial charges whatsoever and an annual management charge of just 1%.
- The market leader.

We now look after £1.4 billion on behalf of over 200,000 customers making the Virgin Growth PEP the most popular index tracking PEP in the UK



CALL US NOW TO FIND OUT MORE. OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK FROM 8am - 10pm www.virgin-direct.co.uk

Forbes unveils presidency bid on the Net

THE MILLIONAIRE publisher BY MARY DEJEVSKY Steve Forbes launched his second campaign for the US presidency yesterday - on the Internet - and promised to wage a "new, information age

The <Forbes2000.com> website sprang into life shortly before 10am, after teasing visitors with a "stand-by" notice for the previous 12 hours. In a recorded message, Mr Forbes said: "Today I'm happy to announce the beginning of my campaign" and described it as "a national crusade to restore Ronald Reagan's vision of hope and prosperity for all

Practically all the presidential candidates (and many conressional candidates) have their own websites, but Mr Forbes is the first to use it for his declaration.

Boasting news of his campaign "first, fast and unfiltered", the website said that Mr Forbes was offering "a dramatic reform agenda to desecurity and values" and prepare every child to "compete and succeed in the information

age economy". Mr Forbes is the fourth Republican to announce formally a presidential bid, but another six have already made it clear ready hold that constituency

in Washington

cluding the two favourites, George W Bush and Elizabeth Dole. While these two have: outlined priorities and programmes that tend towards the Republican centre, Mr Forbes, 51, has moved, if anything, further to the right since: his last campaign - coupling his former tax-cutting zeal with a firmer moral pitch.

Mr Forbes, who spent \$32m. (C20m) on his last campaign, is a proponent of the idea of a "flat tax", which would set a single, low, income and sales tax rate. and abolish most concessions

In theory, this is designed to make the tax burden fairer, but its opponents argue variously that it would penalise the poor, require too high a basic tax rate to be attractive. and minimise the redistributive function of taxation.

A firmer moral dimension to his campaign could also dilute fend America's economy, Mr Forbes' appeal, driving some supporters away and failing to attract new ones.

Even if taking the high moral ground gives a Republican candidate an advantage, candidates like the Christian conservative, Gary Bauer, althat they are in the running, in- and are unlikely to cede it.

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

BUSINESS REVIEW



led: the liquidator's figuidator, page 8 Phys. Hamish McRae. Diane Coyle, Derek Pain, Jo Davis and The Trades

The 12-page Business Review, free every Wednesday GM crop ban 'disastrous' for EU

NOVARTIS, the Swiss life sciences group, warned yesterday that a ban on genetically modified crops could destroy European farming. Wolfgang Samo, head of agribusiness, said the moratorium backed by environmental groups and the UK Conservative Party would have a "disastrous" effect. Novartis's 1998 net income was Sfr6.1bn (£2.6bn).

Tarmac nears £1.5bn demerger

TARMAC moved closer to a £1.5bn demerger of its building materials and construction divisions with plans to inject most of its £317m debt into the materials subsidiary. Chief executive Sir Neville Simms is to become chairman and chief executive of the construction company; the building materials group will be led by Roy Harrison.

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FTSE 350	2957,50	-1.90	-0.06	3024.90	2210,40	2.69
FTSE All Share	2862.31	-1,21	-0.04	2923.83	2143.53	2.73
FTSE SmallCap	2375.80	9.20	0.39	2793.80	1834,40	EAE
FTSE Fledgling	1290.20	3.90	0.30	1517.10	1046.20	4.24
FTSE AIM	858.30	-1.70	-0.20	1146.90	761,30	1.08
FTSE Eurotop 100	2907,97	11,51	0.40	3079.27	2018,15	2.06
FTSE Eurotop 300	1255.25	3.24	0.26	1332.07	880.63	1.95
Dow Jones	9966.82	9.44	0.10	9970.15	7400,30	1,59
Nødel	16072,82	293.22	1.58	17111.59	12787.90	0.88
Hang Seng	10911,25	74,39	0.69	11926.16	6544.79	3.27
Dan	5094.63	65.39	1,30	6717,83	3833.71	1.70
56P 500	1309.00	1,86	0.14	1307.54	923.32	1,23
Nasdag	2449.35	17,86	0,74	2533,44	1357,09	0.28
Torento 300	6623.60	14.20	0.22	7837,70	5320.90	1.60
Brazil Bovespa	10671.67	243,42	2.34	12339,14	4575.69	5.84
Belgium Bel20	3348.24	4.44	0.13	3713.21	2696.26	2.10
Amsterdam Exch	540,64	5.59	1.05	600.65	366,58	1.90
France CAC 40	4186.35	1.23	0.03	4404.94	2881.21	1.86
Milan MIB30	36806.00	-263.00	-0.71	39170.00	24175.00	1.11
Madrid Ibex 35	10213.90	92.90	0.92	10989.80	6869.90	1.71
Irish Overall	5293.83	-38.15	-0.72	5581.70	3732.57	1.54
5 North Carrie	601.33	9.61	1.60	451.55	277.37	0.90

SHORT STERLING	UK 10 YEAR GILT	US LONG BOND
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UK	5.00	-0.68	5.28	-0.50	5 10	0.44	5.47	0.39
Japan	0.19	-0.52	0.23	-0.44	1.88	0 12	2.98	0.62
Germany	3.04	-0.47	3.03	-0.70	3.98	-0.90	4.96	-0.48

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Euro	1,4879	+0.40c	1.4079	Euro	0.9157	-17.77c	0.8571
Yen	191.28	+40.25	216.40	Ven	117.68	-¥0.08	129.52

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Australia (S)	2.4903	Mexican (nuevo peso)	14
Austria (schillings)	19.87	Netherlands (guilders)	3.19
Belgium (francs)	58.44	New Zealand (S)	2.93
Canada (S)	2.4032	Norway (kroner)	12
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8347	Portugal (escudos)	288
Denmark (kroner)	10.81	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.88
Finland (markka)	8.6382	Singapore (S)	2.64
France (francs)	9.4987	South Africa (rands)	9.62
Germany (marks)	2.8425	Spain (pesetas)	240
Greece (drachma)	466.38	Sweden (kronor)	13
Hong Kong (\$)	12.15	Switzerland (francs)	2.3
ireland (punts)	1.1377	Thalland (bahts)	54
Indian (rupees)	61.67	Turkey (Tirasi)	564
israei (shekeis)	6.0132	USA (S)	1.5
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Japan (yen)	186.56	Rates for indication purposes	cely
Malayela (maggite)	5 8363		

Source: Thomas Cook



Traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange celebrating as the Dow passes the 10,000 level for the first time Mike Segar/Reuters

breaks barrier

THE DOW 10,000 arrived vesterday writes David Usborne in New York. History was made and the feel-good American economy that has been powering stocks higher for the past four and a half years suddenly felt even better. Then, in the blink of an eye - or the pop of a champagne cork - it was gone again. The five-digit Dow was four digits again.

The breaking of the mythical barrier happened at 9.50am, just 20 minutes into the day's trading. All heads on the New York Stock Exchange floor turned to the flashing numbers and there it was: Industrial Average up 41.35 points at 10,001.12. There were cheers and applause until, just as quickly, the numbers began to sink back to the ninetynine hundreds.

The index, a composite of the share prices of 30 US blue-chip companies, has surged no less than 6,000

receive payouts

BY DAVID USBORNE in New York AND ANDREW GARFIELD in London

GOLDMAN SACHS' 13,000 staff are to be given shares worth on average \$360,000, when the firm goes public in May with a price tag of up to \$23.4bn, according to figures released by the Wall Street investment bank

The value of the shares being holdings works out at \$52m on average, although the figure hides a wide disparity in holdings, with those of some individuals likely to be in the hundreds of millions.

The figures are included in the official filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission, which vets all public

One of the biggest surprises is the level of basic salary of the top five partners of the firm, which was revealed for the first time yesterday as a mere \$600,000, although the figure does not include their substantial bonus payments.

The stock sale should be

worth up to \$3.45bn (£2.1bn) and account for as much as 14.7 per cent of the company. That will make it the second-largest initial public offering (IPO) in New York this decade, second to the \$4.4hn public offering in Conoco last October The sale will mark the 130-

year-old firm's second attempt at going public. Plans for an earlier share sale were abruptly shelved in September following turmoil in the financial markets and a sharp slump in In the SEC filing, Goldman

as JP Morgan. About 42 million shares will be sold by Goldman

Goldman Staff to Airbus to take £400m \$360,000 charge for black hole'

AIRBUS INDUSTRIE, the European aircraft manufacturer, is being forced to set aside around £400m to cover a "black hole" in its accounts relating to past losses on jet orders.

The disclosure came as it space, have formally applied to their governments for up to £2ba in launch aid for the proposed 600-seat superjumbo, the

given to the firm's 221 partners share of Airbus, is thought to US fought a savage price war.

In exchange for their existing have applied for around £410m Previously Airbus has supin repayable launch funding The other partners are Aérospatiale of France, Daimler-Benz Aerospace of Germany and

BY MICHAEL HARRISON Business Editor

fident the ASXX programme could be launched by mid-2000. However, he indicated that the transformation of Airbus into a 1998 accounts, leaving the conemerged that the four Airbus single corporate entity was now sortium nursing a loss of £120m. partners, including British Aero unlikely to be completed before autumn next year, 18 months behind schedule.

The £400m provision is to cover losses on orders booked in the three years from 1995 to 1997 BAe, which has a 20 per cent when Airbus and Boeing of the

ported aircraft sales with a package of support measures including guarantees, spares and pilot training, but has not Noel Forgeard, chief execu- From now on it will shoulder a change into a conventional pubtive of Airbus, said he was con- much bigger share of these lic company, with shareholders it into service in 2005. Airbus be-

costs, and financing charges, at the time a sale is made. Mr Forgeard refused to dis-

close figures. But it is thought the partners have agreed to take £200m of the provision in the It has also taken has a £30m to £40m provision against a can-

celled order from the Philippines. This means that, leaving aside provisions, Airbus as a consortium made a profit of about £40m last year However industry estimates of the underlying out exceptional charges and exchange-rate losses, range from £400m to £450m.

and a proper balance sheet. However, progress on this and the exchange of valuations of partners' Airbus assets will not occur until Aérospatiale is pri-

the change. The A3XX a double-decker aircraft capable seating 550 to 680 passengers, will cost \$10bm to develop and will sell for between \$213m and \$246m, Mr Forgeard said. Spending on the programme by the partners increases by 50 per cent this year. development in Britain, France,

vatised this summer. It will then

take a further year to complete

Germany and Spain. The aim is to start marketing The tightening of Airbus's the A3XX to sirlines at the end taken them as an upfront cost. accounting is in readiness for its of this year, launch the programme in mid-2000 and bring

lieves there is demand for up to 1.400 such aircraft over the next

Despite reports to the contrary, it is understood that British Airways remains a strong supporter of the A3XX and does not want to see any slippage in the timetable.

About one-third of the programme will be with risk and revenue-sharing partners outside the Airbus consortium. Onethird would come from the partners and the final third from government launch aid.

bus is talking to include Fokker, Saab, Finmeccanica, Mitsubishi of Japan and Aerostructures Corporation of the US. Mr Forgeard said he did not expect Boeing to launch a rival

Shunned Unigate in | City hails public hostile Terranova bid | finance figures

UNIGATE yesterday launched BY NIGEL COPE the first hostile bid in the food Associate City Ed sector for more than six years by tabling a £228.5m offer for Terranova Foods, the chilled foods company demerged from Hillsdown Holdings in October.

The cash offer, at 125p per share, was immediately rejected by Terranova management. It said the bid was "inadequate, opportunistic and fails to reflect the current value or future prospects". Terranova shares soared by 31p to 135.5p, indicating prospects for a higher bid.

Analysts said Unigate would have to raise its offer price to said it planned to sell as many around 140p to 150p to secure as 69 million shares at \$40 to \$50 victory. It is thought some of Terranova's institutions will be each. That would value the bank at \$23.4ba, about the same looking for a reasonable premium to the 140p price at which Terranova was demerged from Hillsdown last autumn The bid will be seen as a test

Business Review, page 3

Associate City Editor

of nerve for Sir Ross Buckland. chief executive of Unigate. He walked away from a £1.5bn bid for the whole of Hillsdown last year, having principally been interested in the chilled food operation. Over the weekend an attempt to gain an agreed deal failed when a 125p Unigate

approach was rejected. Yesterday Sir Ross said be had only been interested in the chilled food business last year, but Hillsdown's reluctance to sell it separately forced him to make an offer for the whole company.

Unigate, whose interests span dairy chilled foods and distribution operations, said the deal had "compelling logic". It highlighted scope for cost savings and synergies, with Unigate adding its buying and distribu-

tion to Terranova's brands. It said Terranova's Buxted chickens would fit with its own Mal-

ton pig division. Unigate's Shape brand could be extended across Terranova's ready meal and sandwich ranges. Analysts say there is scope for cost savings of at least £2.5m a year and that the deal could be earnings enhancing at up to 200p. Unigate is under pressure

to use its £130m cash pile. This is the first hostile bid in food since Tomkins won control of Ranks Hovis McDougall in 1992. Other bidders could enter the ring for Terranova, with Tomkins a candidate.

Sir Ross said: "Terranova has insufficient scale to take advantage of the opportunities open to it. This deal offers certainty to shareholders."

Unigate shares closed unchanged at 410.5p.

THE GOVERNMENT'S finances By DIANE COYLE were in such good shape last month, according to official figures yesterday, that analysts concluded the surplus in 1998-99 would be higher than Gordon Brown predicted in his

Budget last week. The Public Sector Net Cash Requirement (PSNCR) showed a surplus of £1.5bn in February, taking the cumulative surplus for the first 11 months of the financial year to £15.1bn. The Budget estimated the full-year

surplus would be £5.2bn. Although March has traditionally seen a big deficit be-cause of an end-of-year spending surge, this pattern has been less pronounced in recent years. Many analysts are therefore predicting a bigger

surplus of £8-10bn. However, the Treasury downplayed these hopes yes

Ø.

jet in advance of Airbus.

terday, suggesting the pattern of public spending could be reverting to the traditional profile

Even so, vesterday's figures clearly show the public sector's healthy financial position. Net borrowing was in surplus by £1.1bn in February, taking the cumulative total to £8.7bn compared with £3.3bn at the same stage last financial year. Income tax receipts were

buoyant in February thanks to self-assessment. But Customs & Excise receipts have fallen since the new year.

Government expenditure is accelerating as the year-end approaches, from April to February, running £6bn higher than the first 11 months of 1997/98.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

BLUE CHIPS lost ground for the third day in succession. Footsie eased 4.9 points to 6,201.9 after at one time sporting a 62.8 point gain. But supporting shares were more resilient with the mid cap index edging 0.8 higher to 5,519.7 and the small cap rising 9.2 to 2,375.8.

Although the market endured a generally featureless session, trading was again busy with share turnover topping 1.1 billion.

Colt Telecom, which led Monday's retreat, headed the blue chips' risers, rallying 56.5p to

STOCKS surged through the 16,000 BRAZILIAN STOCKS climbed 2.5 per cent to reach their highest level since before the currency crisis last year.

Sao Paulo's Bovespa index broke through the 10,000 barrier for the first time since August. After an 8.8 per cent rise on Monday, the index has risen over 11 per cent in two days.

SAO PAULO

The surge in share prices is powered by increasing optimism that Brazil's economy has begun its recovery from the currency crisis which began seven months

TOKYO

barrier for the first time since August last year on the back of foreign buying and upbeat comments from the Bank of Japan. The Nikkei 225 closed up 1.86 per

cent, or 293.22 points, at 16,072,82. Traders said foreign buyers were increasingly piling into the market as the yen rose against the dollar. Institutions were afraid of missing the effect of the rise, which boosts the value of dollar-denominated portfolios. "The bear market that began in December 1989 ended in March 1999," said one analyst.

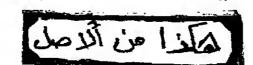
THE BLUE-CHIP CAC-40 index ended marginally up 0.03 per cent at 4,186.35 as Wall Street tracked back. "Everyone was waiting for the Dow to hit 10,000 and when it did we saw a wave of sell orders." said one market-maker. Renault slumped 5.45 per cent

amid selling by US clients worried about the risks of an alliance with Nissan. France Telecom closed down 1.77 per cent ahead of results today, dragging the CAC down 9 points. But a 3.35 per cent rise at the insurance giant Axa countered France Telecom's slide.

FRANKFURT

THE STOCK MARKET continued its rally in the wake of Oskar Lafontaine's resignation, closing up nearly 1 per cent. The Xetra DAX index rose 47.70 points to end at 5,090.93.

Lufthansa, the national airline. umped 4.5 per cent on news that it s to bid for a stake in Thai Airways, while Preussag jumped 4.5 per cent as it received the green light to sell 50 per cent of its shipbuilding unit to Deutsche Babcock. Merger activity between the French banks rippled across the border, lifting Deutsche Bank by 3.4 per cent.



Wednesday 17 March 1999

THE INDEPENDENCE

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Not a penny more for flying circus AIRBUS INDUSTRIE does not pubthe game. For the first time since away bull market, even though this likely, despite the growing size of Bonds have also gone sharply into always bound to be culnerable after its creation three decades ago the column attempted to pass judge-

lish its own accounts - one of the joys of being part of that strange French hybrid known as a Groupe ment D'Interets Economique, or GIE. Even when financial infornation about the business does seep out into the public domain, it is only after liberal use of that old accounting double act, smoke and mirrors.

Whether Airbus really makes money or loses it is, like beauty, in the eye of the beholder. Or, to be more accurate, in the eyes of its industrial partners. Thus Airbus made a bottom-line loss of £120m last year according to British Aerospace, but an underlying profit of up to £450m if you believe Aérospatiale of France. For what it is worth, the figure they use down at Airbus beadquarters in Toulouse is a £40m operating profit.

Noel Forgeard, who took over as chief executive of this peculiar beast a year ago, has sensibly decided that much of the profit the booking for the past three years is as fictional as the finest work of Victor Hugo, and has begun to bring private sector con-

Thus were the Airbus accounts



OUTLOOK

for 1998 ever to see the light of day, they would show a £200m provision to cover exposure to unprofitable aircraft sales over the previous three years when the vicious price war with Boeing was at its height. There will be more of the same provisions this year and next, so that eventually Airbus will have taken

some £400m in charges. The adoption of more conventional accounting techniques is part of the necessary process of transforming Airbus into a single corporate entity with a recognisable lance sheet and a set of shareholders, as opposed to industrial

tampayers of the four member countries, who have already pumped some (2bn into Airbus, will be able to see what their money is buying.

Conversion to this new status could take another 18 months, however, and is supposed to be a prerequisite for any more taxpayers' money being handed over It is ominous, therefore, that the four partners have already applied for-mally for another f2im of launch aid for the latest paper plane - the A3XX super jumbo - with the intention of launching the programme some time in mid-2000.

The economics of the 600-seater iet and the markets for such a huge beast are far from proven, however lyrical Airbus may wax about the aircraft. Full conversion to pic status must be a non-negotiable precondition before a single penny more of taxpayers' money is pumped into this project.

Dow milestone

THE DOW through 10,000 is such a milestone that it seems worth Full transparency is the name of returning to Wall Street's soar-

ment on it only last week. The bears and the bulk of the "serious" British press, including the "Pink 'un" and the Economist, have got it wrong again.

In recent months many have taken to depicting Wall Street as one of the biggest financial bubbles of all time. Plainly the Americans don't believe it. Readers will know that we haven't been exactly immune to the bubble theory ourselves, but we somewhat belatedly changed our minds when we saw action from the Federal Reserve to quell the turmoil in financial markets last autumn, and the subsequent strength of the recovery in equity markets.

There are still good reasons for caution, and the bears must be right in insisting that eventually there will be a correction. Increasingly, however, they become like Tony Dye at Phillips & Drew, the scale of the correction now needed to vindicate their underweight positions in US equities has become so horrendous that it would take an economic calamity of monumental propor-

tions to bring it about At this juncture that hardly looks

the US trade deficit and the risk reverse so far this year But until that foreign investors will not be prepared to finance it for very much longer. It probably doesn't make sense to pile into US equities at these levels, but until the world changes, nor does it to predict calamity. Foreigners are prepared to keep pouring capital into the US not just because of the lack of alternatives, but also because

The US economy cannot keep growing indefinitely at the present heady pace without a resurgence in price pressures. In a recent speech, Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, wondered out loud whether the Fed had not overreacted in cutting interest rates as far as it did in response to the

ment and growth.

financial turmoil of the autumn. So far, however, the American economy shows little sign of giving him an excuse to raise them again. Inflation remains stoically in abeyance. There are warning signs; how far, for instance, do zero shortterm interest rates in Japan help provide a prop for Wall Street?

there are real grounds for the Fed to act. US equity prices should bold their value.

Terranova Foods

YOU HAVE to go back to Tomkins's bid for Ranks Hovis McDougall in 1992 for the last hostile bid in American business for the time Britain's none-too-exciting food sector. We've got another one now, being seems to offer the best chance of innovation, advancebut sadly Unigate against Terranova Foods hardly has the look of a ding-dong battle. First, it is relatively small at less than £230m. Second, it is unlikely to go the full

> We've been here before, of course, though the names have changed a bit in the past few months. It was only last autumn that Unigate had a £1.6bn dalliance with Hillsdown Holdings. It didn't much fancy the whole package, you understand, only one of its attributes. It was the chilled foods operations that led it to make an approach for the whole of the Hillsdown beast before eventually being frightened off.

The division was therefore

being spun off in October as Terranova Foods, and so it has proved. Unigate had a go at an agreed deal at the weekend, but was rejected. Now it is a case of third time lucky: Or so it hopes,

What all this proves is that Unigate is as keen as mustard to buy this business. It wants Terranova's European interests to add to its own, while Terranova's Buxted chickens would make a neat fit with Unigate's Malton pig business. Add to this the target's M&S sandwich supply business, and it looks a very tasty morset.

It won't win the prize at this price, though. Terranova has hardly been a stellar performer as a quoted entity, but Unigate's 125p per share offer gives it a measly exit multiple of t4. The rise in Terramova's chare price to 135.5p means Unigate must go higher.

Analysts reckon that around 150p would win the day, which would certainly suit Phillips & Drew, which was buying the stock heavily at around 90p as recently as January. For it to get more exciting than this would take a rival bidder to emerge. So far. Tomkins is the

CSFB cuts bonuses after slide into the red |Rhodia tops US

per cent at Credit Suisse First Financial Editor Boston following a torrid year in which the investment bank slumped Sfr221m (£93m) into the red after taking a hit of nearly Sfr2bn on last autumn's Rigisian bond market collapse.

Uredit Suisse, the bank's Swiss parent, also said yesterday that Dick Thornburgh is to step aside as group chief financial officer in April His place will be taken by Philip Ryan, currently chief financial officer of Credit Suisse Asset Management, while Mr Thornburgh moves to another role as vice chairman in charge of risk management at CSFB.

Bonuses were cut most steeply in equities and in emerging markets bonds, which suffered most beavily in last autumn's turmoil. These Wheat, CSFB chairman, rewere also the areas which bore the brunt of last year's job peated the invitation to other banks to join in the scheme the

BONUSES HAVE been cut by 27 By Andrew Garfteld

However, the bank said that payouts were much better on the pure investment banking side, which had a very good year, and in US and European fixed income, which beld up

Lukas Mühlemann, chief ex-ecutive officer of Credit Suisse Group said that, but for the Russian losses, CSFB would have made profits of Siraba last

At group level, however, profits rebounded sharply to Str3.1bn post-tax from Str601m in 1997, despite the CSFB upset largely as a result of dramatic improvement at the bank's domestic retail operations. Speaking by video link from New York yesterday, Allen

ORLANDO SZZY

have as much of 40 per cent of the total GKO and OFZ bond

debt, preliminary indications from the Russian government are that the scheme needs wider backing for it to get serious consideration. "The Russian government's reaction is that if it is something of meaningful size and can be a cohesive group they are very prepared to discuss it," he said.
"I hope we can come up with something which suits the creditors and which also suits the Russian economy."

bank has proposed for swap-

ping worthless Russian bonds

for stakes in Russian oil and gas

While CSFB and its clients

He said CSFB had successfully integrated the former BZW husinesses acquired from Barclays Bank the previous year, and had substantialincreased investment ly banking market share.



Lukas Mühlemann, chief executive officer of Credit Suisse Group, yesterday. He said | A&W to back its offer and with-CSFB would have made Sfr2bn profit but for Russian losses Mark Chilvers | draw the recommendation for

The Ultimate

bid for Albright

ALBRIGHT & WILSON, the fine BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA chemicals group, was yesterday thrust into a transatlantic takeover war after Rhodia of France launched a £455m cash offer, topping a £408m bid from the US company Albemarie. Rhodia's offer of 145p per

share received the conditional backing of Phillips & Drew. A&W's largest shareholder. The fund manager pledged to sell its 23 per cent stake to the French speciality chemicals group - majority owned by Rhone-Poulenc - provided no other party bids more than 160p a share. The offer is being made through an Austrian investment vehicle to avoid interfering with Rhope-Poulenc's merger with Hoechst, the German life sciences company.

Rhodia asked the board of

Albemarle's 130p-a-share bid.

A&W refused to comment but it is likely to back Rhodia at a board meeting tomorrow. Analysts said the move could

trigger o counteroffer from Albemarie or flush out other bidders, "This is not a knockout blow," said Martin Evans, head of research at Sutherlands. A&W shares soored 10.5p to

148p, indicating the market's expectation of a higher bid. Industry sources said Albemarle, which bought 18 per cent of A&W at 130p, could table a higher bid to force Rhodia to pay more. The US company said it was reviewing its options.

Pierre Prot. Rhodia's chief financial officer, said a link with Albright would boost the combined group's geographical coverage and buying power:

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Public Notices

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there on the 27th November, 1997 November, (Residuary Estate about £28,000). The kin of the above The kin of the above named are requested to apply to Mrs. H. Copeland, 3, Otd Windmill Way, Long Crendon, Aylesbury, Buckinghemshire HP18 9BQ, failing which the Treasury Solicitor may take steps to collect the undisposed of estate.

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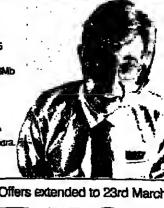
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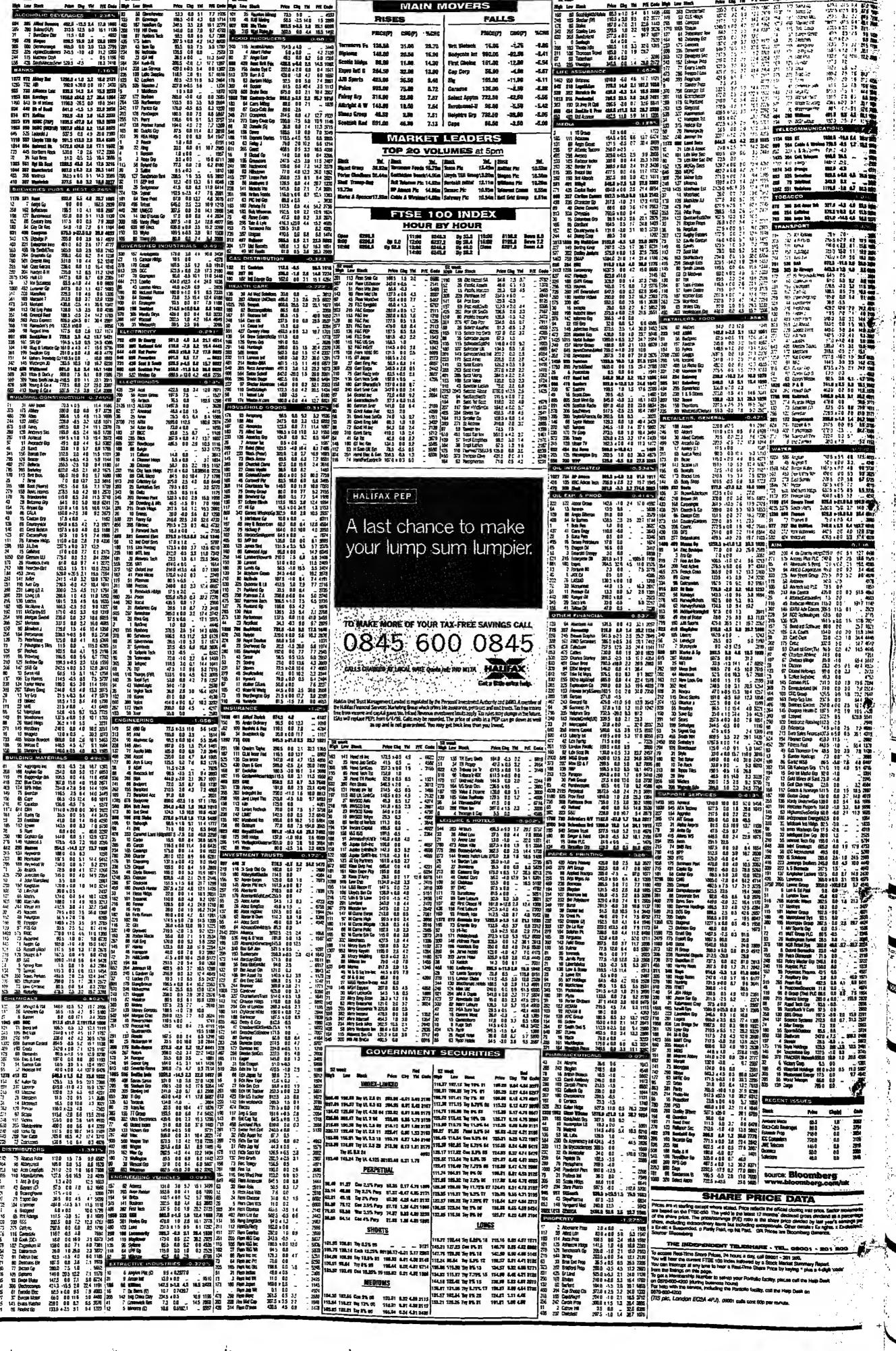


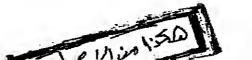
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Footsie unmoved by the Dow celebrations

ONLY A few months ago the sight of the Dow Jones Averge riding above 10,000 points Tould have given Footsie cause for celebration.

Not any more. As New York achieved, if only briefly, the remarkable landmark, London's blue chip index drifted 4.9 lower to 6,201.9. It was the third fall on the trot.

At one time the index was 62.8 higher but then weakened as the ramifications of the European Union shakeup prompted a more cau-

But Footsie has for much of this year drifted out of line with the Dow Jones Average as the US index has burned on a rampant display, climbing from 9,276.

Many blame the decoupling on the launch of the euro and the Government's distinct shift towards the European culture. Although still by far the world's biggest share market, New York

ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY Systems, the most successful share on the fringe Ofex market, is moving to AIM. It is not raising any new money, and the stockbroker JM Finn appears to be elevating the shares through a simple introduction. Since arriving on Ofex, Robotic's shares have climbed from

the nuclear industry as well as robotic technology. could be losing at least some

350 to around 305p. RTS

specialises in automation

stems and services for

of its dominance, Talk of a break has been around for years. And every so often London bas appeared to flex its muscles and ignore its trans-Atlantic big brother. But such displays of independence have been brief and the slavish dependence on Wall Street has reasserted itself.

The Dow Jones Average has looked a sure fire bet to hit 10,000 from the early days of this year. Footsie moved to new highs in 1999, the last -6,335.7 - was reached last

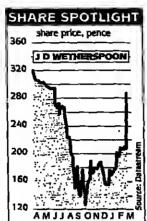
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FTSE 100

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN



erage, and has often been pulled back by events which at one time would have been regarded as dismissible little local difficulties.

Although the stock market had a featureless session. trading was again busy with share volume nudging 1.1 billion. Supporting indices were to the fore with the mid cap up 0.8 to 5.519.7 and the small cap improving an impressive 9.2 to 2.375.8.

Once again takeover bids spurred the small cap brigade. Porter Chadburn, a packaging group, rose 14p to 37.25p as a US group appeared with a 38.5p a share offer, and Eclipse Blinds added 15p to 112,5p after Headlam, up 3.5p at 348.5p, produced a share exchange

Terranova, the food group, duly collected a bid from Unigate, jumping 31.5p to 135.5p as the market geared itself for a possible bid battle or at least an improvement on the

And Albright & Wilson a 145p shot, from interests re-Rhodia the French gerness of the Dow Jones Ave group. But mergers are not returned to haunt the sector. GILTS INDEX: N/A

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always rewarding - as First Asda fell 2.5p to 142.75p and Choice, the package holiday Tesco 2.25p to 159.75p. group, continues to illustrate. The shares fell a further 12p to 161p, against a recent 189p high, on disappointment with

After their bashing on Monday telecoms recovered some ground with Colt Telecom up 56.5p to 995.5p al-

though BT lost 19p to 1,039p. Ladbroke, the betting and hotel group, greeted the start of the Cheltenham Festival with a losing share price, off 12.5p at 295.25p. Warburg Dillon Read appeared to do the damage, reining back its recommendation from buy to

The major banks were firm, helping to reduce the Footsie retreat.

HSBC and Standard Chartered were singled out for attention as Morgan Stanlev increased its HSBC target to 2,200p and Standard to

HSBC rose 27p (after 72p) to 1,929p and Standard 9.5p (27.5p) to 907p. Royal Bank of Scotland was up 43p to 1,289.5p as, coincidentally, HSBC lifted its share forecast to 1,500p. National Westminster Bank was 24p high-

er at 1,472p. National Power was up 10p at 463.5p following a back Finance. banded compliment from scribed the shares as too low Tomkins, the buns to guns

conglomerate, remained under the whip, falling a further 10p to 214.5p. British Aerospace was

lowered 8.5p to 394p as the restructuring of Airbus Industrie, where BAe has 20 per cent, into a commercial company was advocated by John Leahy, the bead of global He says the reshaping is

needed for financial reasons and the proposed A3XX airliner. The various parties controlling Airbus are in favour of the restructuring but have been squabbling over management control.

Safeway fell 10.25p to 238.75p as a line of 1.5 million duly collected a higher offer, shares went through at 237p. Other supermarkets weak-

Disappointment with engineer Bodycote's figures hit the shares 92.5p to 890 and a profit warning from Kelsey the proposed merger with Industries smashed the Kuoni Reisen, the Swiss trav- price 125p to 310p.

Hi-tec, the sport shoes group, said it would make a loss and jogged 2.5p lower to

JD Wetherspoon, the pubs chain, frothed 10.5p higher to 283.5p as Merrill Lynch adopted a more positive stance.

Signet, the jeweller, firmed 0.75p to 47.5p in busy trading with Cazenove said to be backing the shares. UK Land climbed 11p

(after 18p) to 116.5p on ru-

mours it had sold London's Elephant & Castle shopping centre for around £17m. The company denied the story. Morgan Crucible rose 12.5p to 259p following the sale of its maintenance and

SHARES OF Griffin Mining, which has zinc reserves in China, have nearly doubled to 18p since November.

The company has a dual AIM/Toronto share presence and it is thought that much of the advance stems from Canadian interest. Griffin used to be called European Mining

The present management Merrill Lynch. In effect it de- arrived after a shareholder revolt about a year ago. Charles Stanley yesterday became the company's stockbroker following its acquisi-tion of Burrough Johnstone.

> repair business for £170m. It intends to buy back up to 14.99 per cent of its shares.

West 175, which makes cookery programmes for television, bas clinched the acquisition of 60 per cent of Montage Projects a production company. The shares gained 7p to 63.5p.

Somic, involved in a management buy out, jumped 25p

It is selling its fabrics business to its management and turning itself into a cash

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Telewest connects, but shares look expensive

Market value: £5,250n, share price 243,75p (+,25p)

Trading record 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998

Profit for the year (Em) -65:0 -115.0 -250.0 -310.0 -314.0

Title to come

BY PETER THAL LARSEN

TELEWEST, the cable group, yesterday displayed further evidence that it is finally realising the potential of its business that it has promised to for so long. But even this may not be enough to sustain its current share price.

Pre-tax losses deepened for the sixth consecutive year in the 12 months to December, rising to £314m from £310m. However, the market was more interested in Telewest's operating statistics, which generally showed an improvement.

In the cable television business, penetration increased by 1.9 percentage points to 23.8 per cent, while churn - the proportion of the customer base leaving the service - dropped to 29.5 per cent from 34.5 per cent. Telewest's telephony penetration also improved, up by almost 2 points to 30.5 per cent. However, churn also edged up, reflecting a determined carmaign by British Telecom to win back

former customers. The figures show the benefits of Telewest's decision to stop digging up the roads morder to concentrate on signing up new customers. The company has introduced a cut-price package

combination of good products and great value, and people are more rejuctant to give those up." said Tony Illsley, the new chief

50 94 95 96 97 98 99

combining a basic set of televi-

sion channels with a cheap tele-

Dividends per share (p)

Since his appointment in September Mr Illsley - a former portion answered within 30 sec-

Telewest is gearing up to launch its digital television and high-speed Internet services in the fourth quarter of this year. For the first time, cable operators have an advantage over competitors such as British Sky Broadcasting and British Telecom because they alone have a high-speed network capable of sending and receiving large amounts of data.

Much rests on the ability of these new services to deliver extra revenues for Telewest in the future.

At the moment the City is reserving its judgement. "The evidence is now irrelatable that Mr Illsley has improved the consumer focus at Telewest," said Alan Lyons, telecoms analyst at ABN Amro. "Time will tell whether the statistics respond."

On current forecasts, however, Telewest's share price, which has doubled in the past year, looks expensive. On a ratio of enterprise value to earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation - a common valuation measure for telecoms stocks - Telewest is now more highly rated than Vodafone.

Few doubt the potential of cable, but Mr Illsley will find it hard to live up to that kind of

Bottler falls flat in eastern Europe

COCA-COLA BEVERAGES, the BY NIGEL COPE bottling operation that came to the market last summer continued its disappointing run some territories, leading to an yesterday with a 9 per cent fall m operating profits, attributed to problems in the Ukraine and Belarus. These operations fell into losses following the devaluation of the Russian rouble last

The company has taken action to shed jobs and mothball plants in the two trouble-

Associate City Editor

exceptional charge of £14.2m. This, together with £15.4m of other reorganisational charges, nushed Coca-Cola Beverages into a £15.5m loss for the year.

However, the chairman and chief executive, Neville Isdell, said the group should not be judged solely on its two worstperforming regions. He point-

PEOPLE AND

BUSINESS

BY JOHN

WILLCOCK

Italy and Poland as grounds for We feel a bit like Lennox

Crisps snack foods group - has

focused on improving service

levels at the notoriously cus-

He points out that 94 per cent

of calls to the company's cus-

tomer service centre are now

answered, compared to 82 per

cent six months ago. The pro-

tomer-unfriendly Telewest.

Lewis," said Mr Isdell. "We've lost two rounds, but no-one seems to be interested in the other 10."

Even so the bottling group, which is 50 per cent owned by Coca-Cola, has proved to be a major stock market disappointment. The float was 13

ed to volumes up 6 per cent and times oversubscribed last sumgood growth in markets such as mer at an issue price of 160p as investors bought into the story of growth from emerging markets and the backing of the

Coca-Cola brand. But the Russian crisis has damaged both the business and sentiment and the shares now languish at 89p, down by 2.5p yesterday.

Prospects do not look to be exciting, but now is not the right

- but for Andersen Consulting.

Yesterday Lord Hamiya, the

Assets lose their balance

RED FACES over at Financial Objects, the banking software firm that reported its maiden results yesterday. Analysts perusing the balance sheet were stunned to discover that the numbers didn't add up; some-

from their net current assets. A contrite spokeswoman explained: "It was all down to a yping error" At least she didn't blame the software...

Flown the coop

JOHN CHARMAN, regarded as one of the most aggressive and acerbic insurance brokers in the Lloyd's of London market. has lost his top-ranked five-man aviation team to rivals Welling

Mr Charman won't be unduly worried. He's trousered over £100m in cash from selling his Charman Group to Ace, one of the biggest Bermudan-based reinsurance companies, a few months ago.

The aviation team is led by Peter Williams, the active underwriter of Syndicate 960. To rub salt in the wound, Wellington, a quoted Lloyd's insurance company, inhabits offices stap bang next to Mr Charman's in Minster Court, a Gothic ed-

Pru's off board

PRULETTH is throwing in her apron at the Halifax. The famous restauranteur and former Businesswoman of the Year is

about to reach 60 and is due to their annual results press conenter a well earned retirement. ference yesterday with a cockboard of Leeds Building Society in 1992. The Leeds was subsequently merged with the Halifax, which in turn demutualised in June 1997.

Flames doused

WHO SAYS Swiss gnomes don't have a sense of humour? Lukas Muhleman, chief executive of Credit Suisse, and his fellow executives concluded

"Flaming Ferrari", of course, but none were forthcoming. There are limits.

Bob's temple

WHATEVER WOULD Robert Maxwell have made of it? The old Mirror headquarters at Holborn Circus, which the late tycoon wanted to redevelop as a giant temple to his success, is at last being developed

publisher, bought the building at 33 Holborn. He has planning permission for a "spectacular glass and steel building", costing £135m and designed by Sir Norman Foster, which will provide 320,000 square feet of space for Andersen

Elliott Bernerd, the chairty group, provided "assistance" to Lord Hamlyn in the pur-

This London "midtown" property market seems to be perking up a bit. Goldman Sachs is about to stuff another 5.000 people into Fleet Street. where it already has a head office. Perhaps not everybody's off to Canary Wharf, after all.

E-mail: j.willcock@independent.co.uk

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* Before Exceptionals ** Fully Dikates

The Index-Tracking PEP

Source: Micropal/LGBA, Legal & General FTSE All-Share Index-Tracking FEP on an offer to bid basis based on all FEP charges with grows income returnated from 01.11.95 france launch? To 01.05.99. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. From 00.04.99 to credic on UR divident distributions will only be table to be reclaimed by FEPs at a reduced rate of 10% Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount an ented. Jull wrome decids are resultable on amount an exted. Full wroten details are available on request. All statements are correct as as 01.03 99. The Government have amounteed that contributions can only be made to PEPs until April 1999. Press can only be made to PEPs until April 1999. From that then a new tex privileged savings vehicle, the individual Savings Account (SA) will be available. Legal & General (Direct) Lingued. Registered in England No. 2702000. Registered Office Temple Court. II Queen Victoria Seres, London EUN 177. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and elling life assume and investment productioning Legal & General's name.

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Dillon master of the betting odds as C



THE BRIAN VINER INTERVIEW

THE CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL is upon us. Yesterday, the phenomenal Istabraq won the Champion Hurdle for the second successive year. If be hadn't, the casualty department at Cheltenham General would have ingly digested their hats. The out-Mike Dillon, the public relations director at Ladbrokes, fancies Florida Pearl to pip Teetoo Mill, and punters might be wise to put their money where his mouth is. "Teeton Mill's a very good traveller," he says. "He can inject a burst of speed during a race. But I think Florida Pearl travels better. He's been brought along very well, he knows the territory, and Dunwoody's an ice-

Dillon, a hugely engaging Man-cunian, is not only the public face of Ladbrokes, he also helps set their horse-racing odds. And he has a pretty good record in the Gold Cup. Seven years ago, he reckooed that the favourite, Carvill's Hill, was unlikely to win. "He was ridden by Scudamore, trained by Martin Pipe, both all-cooquering, and he had woo the Welsh National very easy, but I felt he had an Achilles beel, that on an undulating track over fast ground he

The odds were set accordingly. with Ladbrokes offering a better orice than every other bookmaker We were evens when everyone else was odds on. When they were 6-4, we were 2-1. We took fortunes. And when he got beaten by Cool Ground, so I thought. About five minutes after the race we found out that an unemployed joiner from Portsmouth or somewhere had had these 10p douhles and trebles, and that the last leg was Cool Ground, a 25-1 shot in the Gold Con. He won almost 6600,000 for about seven quid. That's the magic of the game, you see. We go from euphoria to total despair."

The unemployed joiner was called Dick Mussell, and he has an entire file to himself at Ladbrokes' head office in oorth-west London. Dillon shows it to me, laughing with the abandon of a man who can afford to be magnanimous. During the three-day Cheltenham Festival, the bookmaking industry expects to take around £100m in bets, an average of £5m per race, and Ladbrokes has a quarter share of the

market To accommodate the punters, the ever-obliging Ladbrokes are opening their Cheltenham shops at 8am, and even permitting bets in Irish punts. Meanwhile, the company has already pocketed at least £60,000 - one punter placed £40,000 at 4-1 on His Song to win yesterday's Arkle Challenge Trophy (he was unplaced), and had a further £20,000 treble on His Song, Istabraq and Florida Pearl.



Mike Dillon's white-knuckle ride: 'A big gambler called Noel Furlong had a horse called The Illiad. He backed him from 36-1 down to 6-1 and won about £2m that day

Dillon is enjoying himself at Chel-tenham. I should think that if he's rubbing his hands gleefully, Ladbrokes are quids in. But if the knuckles are white, the punters are winning. Or perhaps just one punter. "A few years ago a big gambler called Noel Furlong had a horse called The Illiad," Dilloo recalls. "He ran in the race we sponsor at Leopardstown in January the Ladbroke, and Furlong backed him from 36-1 down to 6-1. He woo about £2m that day, and then The Illiad ran in the Champion Hurdle. Furlong backed him in big multiple bets with another horse of his, who ran in the first race and absolutely doddled it. Luckily The Illiad didn't win at Cheltenham, or he'd have won about £20 million. Noel Furlong took the ring oo on his

own that day."
In bookmaking jargon, the betting market is "the ring." And the offering of seductive odds, attracting large oumbers of bets, is known as "getting a horse beaten". In the Grand National one year, Dillon got Bonanza Boy beaten, big-time. "I just couldn't see him winning. I have a set of rules when I assess a horse. and the oumber one rule is how well it travels. I don't like horses who have to be hustled and bustled, and

trainer, Martin Pipe, ridden by the rows of bets under 5-2." Similarly, you needn't be champion jockey, Peter Scudamore, All the world wants to back him and he can't win." Dillon is admirably candid about

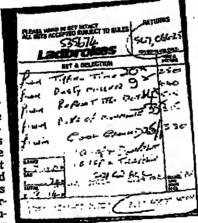
his efforts to, in essence, hoodwink the punter And that's fair enough, since plenty of punters try to hoodwink the bookie, by foul means as well as fair. Ladbrokes shop managers, particularly in horsey areas like Newmarket, are expected to hold a particularly tight rein. "If there's a selling hurdle at Plumpton on a Monday, and someone comes in off the street, someone you've never seen before, and puts on £10,000, the manager would want locking up if he didn't think the fella might know more about the race than we do."

The fixing of football matches by nobbling the floodlights is only the latest of many betting scams. Dillon recalls Ladbrokes offering odds oo the results of seven-frame matches in a snooker tournament in Derby about 15 years ago. "And a fella came into one of our shops wanting to bet £2,000 at 7-1 on a particular game finishing 5-2. The manager told him the price had gone down to evens. He said well, I'll have viously a hooky game. The manager had a ledger of all the bets and

"All Irish horses," notes Dillon. "So Bonanza Boy was one of those. But there was nothing in the 7-0 or the ly. "At Cheltenham a few years ago rides in three races, all of which lost, you needn't be Einstein to know he was trained by the champion 6-1 or 4-3 columns, but rows and I didn't think a horse called Kriben- and when I met him he said they

There are other people at Ladbrokes to look after small fry like ed the trainer, Michael Stoute. He snooker however Dillon's overriding concern is horse racing, which represents 70 per cent of the company's £1.7bn turnover, with dog racing amounting to 20 per cent. And his daily challenge is to get a horse beaten, a challenge which on occasion, I venture, must go badly wrong.

"Oh yeah, I've made some catastrophic mistakes," he admits bright-



two grand at evens, then.' It was ob- Passport to a fortune: The betting slip that won almost £600,000 for Dick Mussell

SPORTS LETTERS

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sis had what it took to win the Champion Hurdle. I underestimat-

was a flat trainer with only one fumper, and I thought be was playing at it. So we laid 5-1 When everyone else offered 4-1, and of course be won. I was sick as a pig." The extra unit lost Ladbrokes about a million pounds, says Dillon, blanching even now at the memory. But the chief executive of the racing division, Peter George, who now runs the whole

Sometimes, losses are borne not only stoically but cheerfully, in the knowledge that they add up to an investment in the company's future. "Every time Red Rum won, we lost," says Dillon. "But we didn't mind paying out, because it increased the profile of betting. He took us off the sports pages and put us on the news pages. The same with Desert Orchid, and with Dettori's Seven, which cost the industry £40 million. I know £40m is a bit of a steep advertising budget, but in the long

company, was supportive. "He just

told me to stick to my principles."

Knowing this, it is hard to overlook the old saw that bookies never lose. Moreover, I tell Dillon that I was at Leopardstown earlier this year to interview the champion jump jockey Tony McCoy. I backed McCoy's

the industry."

run Dettori's Seven was fantastic for

never had a prayer of winning any-way. "Betting is a mug's game," McCoy told me. At this, Dillon's cheerful countenance clouds over "Don't tell Dick Mussell it's a mug's game," he says. "Besides, we run the oo-course betting shop at Leopardstown, and we ran out of both money and cheques that day. We had to tell the punters to come back for their winnings the next day, which pleased them, actually. They would rather go to the pub and say Ladbrokes couldn't afford to pay them than have the money to buy a round."

Dillon is a betting man himself He bets very selectively, and with slightly more prudence than the man who wrote to Ladbrokes asking what price they would give oo him being abducted by aliens and returned to earth as a giant yellow teapot. "I have very good discipline," says Dillon. "I can go weeks without, then have two in half an hour." He knows, of course, who most of the high rollers are. "But sometimes people come out of the ground," he says, "Like the guy who put £80,000 in cash on Shergar to win the Derby, or the fella who came in with a Halifax Building Society draft for 50 grand, and put it on Carvill's Hill to win the Gold Cup. That was the original placing your

house oo one.' The biggest single bet he can re-

nosebands. "We took a credit bet of £2 millioo at evens on Brazil to with the 1994 World Cup in 90 minutes of normal time. They didn't, although there was a worrying moment when the ball came off the post and into the Italian goalie's hands." Meanwhile, Dillon must be the only Manchester United supporter hoping that United leave Milan with nothing better than a 0-0 draw tonight. "That would suit us great. We want United in the semi-final but punters_ don't bet oo nil-nils. The last game . was the worst possible result for us. because Dwight Yorke scoring the first goal and a score of 2-0 was the. most popular double. We lost about £250,000 on that match."

Ladbrokes will also lose a significant amount of money if a female. jockey wins next month's Grand National. In 1989, a punter bet £400 in doubles and trebles on Cliff Richard being knighted (4-1), a Brit become ing world heavyweight boxing champioo (10-1), and a female jockey winning the National (33-1), all by the year 2000. He has already won £11,000 and stands to win a further £128,000 if the third leg of his treble comes off. Indeed, be has offered certain trainers £50,000 of his winnings to give a woman a top ride. "Luckily be has no possible chance in the world," says Dillon. He pauses, as if to reassure himself. "No, no, no. No possible chance in the world." Oricina in

Mystery of the Orient

Sir: I refer to the statement in today's newspaper (early editions, 15 March) headed: "Frank Warren (promoter and Leytoo Orient chairman)".

I take this as a serious libellous and scandalous statement! I would not go and watch Leyton Orient upoo the pain of death. FRANK WARREN Sports Network Europe, Hertford

Draw your own conclusion

Sir: Your main article on Saturday's fight couldn't have been further from the truth. I am an English expatriate living in the US. I paid \$50 (£30) to watch the fight live on HBO.

At the end of the fight, the three commentators (all Americans) including George Foreman, decried the result. One of the commentators said: "Tonight two

judges stole the result." Foreman said: "Tonight I am ashamed to be an American. Britain could at least be proud in the knowledge that Lennox Lewis is the best heavyweight boxer in the world." Finally, the Governor of New York has ordered an investigation by the State athletic commission regarding possible bribery and corruption.

I saw Lennox Lewis dominate the fight. I have no doubt he was MARTIN IRISH via e-mail

Crisp put down

Sir. In his article (Pringle's perspective suits Charlton", 13 March) Gienn Moore describes Martin Pringle, the Charlton footballer, as "a dark-skinned Swede with an English name".

It is possible that Mr Moore may have fallen into the common error of believing that Scotland is part of England. Alternatively, he may be unaware that Pringle is in fact one of the most Scottish of names; unlike many of the names widely regarded as being Scottish, its origins are not Irish and can be traced to an identifiable location north of the border. JOHN PRINGLE Balerno, Midlothian

Hodgson's choice

Sir: Re: "Merseyside on defence over Fowler furore" by Guy Hodgson (12 March), What an excellent article this is. Nothing I have seen or heard to date sums up the feelings of Merseysiders on the good guy-bad guy reporting since the Le Saux-Fowler incident.

To a complete outsider how must all this look? Therein lies the answer JOHN COWELL via e-mail

Unwise words

Sir. Today in the Independent you quote Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, as saying: "When Italians tell me it's pasta I check under the sauce to see if it is. They are masters of the smokescreen."

Is that not a racist remark and are you not fostering racism by giving space to such remarks? AMINA SANTCROSS Wembley, Middlesex

Crying foul

Sir: First I'd like to point out that banter and mind games between footballers is oothing new. It does not excuse a player giving a forearm smash around the back of another player's head while the ref isn't looking. If, as Richard Williams writes in his article on the front page of last Thursday's Review. Graeme Le Saux is as much of a culture vulture as we are led to believe, then surely this educated, informed lad can realise that Fowler was, although very crudely, simply winding him up. Anyone with any common sense could have realised this and for someone so educated to react in such a way is equally out of

Based on the report from a friend, Williams then goes on to further character assassinate Fowler, (this is the lad who was commended by Uefa for his honesty against Arsenal last season) leading the reader to

believe that Fowler is oothing more than a money-grabber, having just signed a £40,000 per week contact with Liverpool while Le Saux is an innocent bystander who has a fiery temper, fights with his own team-

mates and is constantly getting booked and sent off for retaliation all for simply reading the Guardian. On the other hand, you could say Fowler was crude in his method and needs reprimanding. But you could also say that Fowler

has resisted the money-grabbing

Bosman option and instead chosen to earn the living that any other top Premiership player can at the club that brought him up through the ranks, thus proving that chibs and players can still be loyal to each other. **BRIAN NICHOLAS**

The Wirral

Snob tendency

Sir. Thank you for reinforcing my views on the "glory seekers" who believe that the only football worth watching is League, or

preferably Premiership football Alan Edge's article on non-League football ("Man marked by an anorak", 15 March), even taking into account its attempts to be humorous, was patronising. If he really believes that non-League games are just the preserve of "anoraks" he can't be going to many non-League games. The vast majority of non-League fans are totally normal and support teams who are connected with where they live or were born. They get as much enjoyment as any League fan and treat the game

with more humour and realism. Mr Edge should use his weekends off from blowing £30 to see "real" football to go and patronic someone else! At your local test you'll get a warm welcome at the mistakes, and have some If you want to sneer, stay at home CHRIS HUNTER

Woking Supporter and proud PS Well done on your Non-Less Notebook. Keep up the good work

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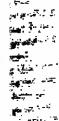
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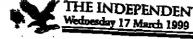
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England cautious as Catt recalled

THERE WAS a good deal of talk about "Tag Rugby" at Twickenham yesterday, not only be-cause the Ford Motor Company had just invested £700,000 in a nationwide campaign to promote the latest non-contact form of the game, but because the French were about to cross the channel for this weekend's episode of the long-running sporting soap celebrated throughout Europe as "Le Crunch". Judged purely on their performance against Wales in Paris 11 days ago, this

Not that Clive Woodward is taking any liberties or counting any onions; in fact, the England coach is so deeply suspicious of the French side's apparent enthusiasm for rugby pacifism in all its manifestations – no shoving in the scrums, no jumping in the line-outs, no tackling in midfield - that he has resisted the temptation to tinker with his line-up and restricted himself to one enforced change in the starting XV and two alterations, equally enforced, among the re-

latest Tricolore vintage looks about as "non-contact" as it is

possible to get.

Mike Catt was 99 per cent certain to return at outside half once Paul Grayson had been diagnosed as suffering from a stress fracture of the pelvis and Woodward was a paragon of predictability yesterday. "The change was pretty straightforward," confirmed the coach. "I watched Mike play for Bath at Richmond on Saturday and he performed very well. It's not a great time for Paul to be injured but I feel more upset for him than I do for myself."

The beach personnel has some surprises, however. Barrie-Jon Mather, Sale's forappears in a Test 22 for the first the game. All we can be sure of ime and his appearance is an indicator of the paucity of England's midfield resources in the long-term absence of Will Greenwood and Phil de Glanville. Darren Grewcock's serious knee injury means a recall for Garath Archer as substitute lock, while Victor Ubogu's form for Bath has slammed the door on Leicester's Graham Rowntree, who must seek dubious solace in Friday's second-string A international at Redruth.

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Woodward's decision to field

RUGBY UNION

BY CHRIS HEWETT

Grayson against the Irish in the last round of Five Nations matches merely reinforced the English rughy public in their opinion of Catt: that his occasional brilliance is a huxury. The coach mounted an enthusiastic defence of the mercurial Bath stand-off yesterday -"Paul gave us exactly what we needed in Dublin, but who can know for sure that I wouldn't have brought in Mike for this one?" he asked - but Catt himself appeared to acknowledge the short-term nature of his promotion.

"I'm getting used to the feeling of keeping the outside-half at warm for others," he said, referring to Jonny Wilkinson rather than Grayson. "Jonny is an exceptional talent and when Clive and the selectors consider the time right for him to take hold of the No 10 shirt, I'm sure they'll move him inside from centre. But in the meantime, it's up to me to go out there and make things happen whenever I'm given the opportunity. Personally speaking, this Saturday is pay-back day."

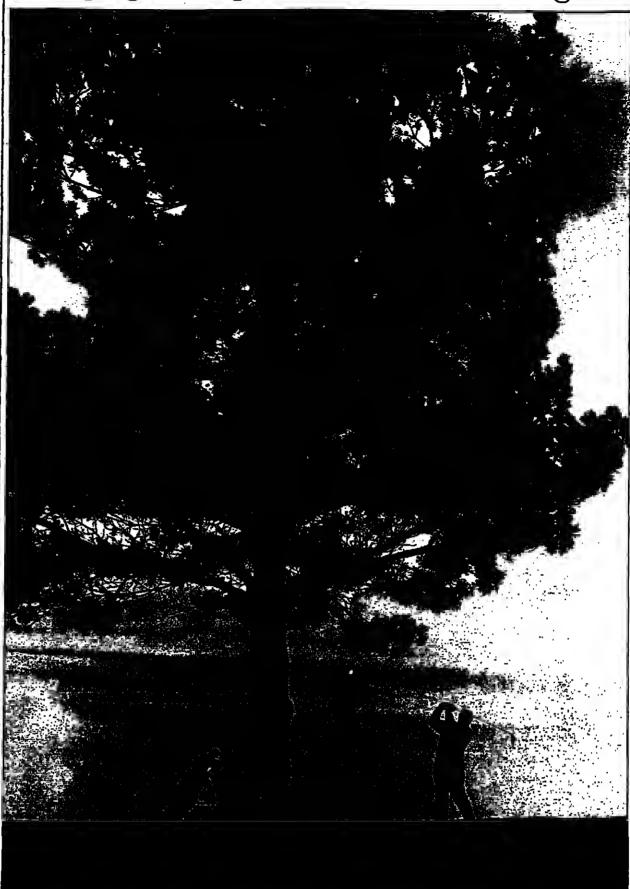
Catt was not alone in finding last season's corresponding fixture at the Stade de France a debilitating experience; indeed, Woodward still refers to it as the low point of his coaching career quite a statement when you take into account the 76-0 nightmare in Brisbane. "It hurt, not simply because it was so unexpected but because it was the first game of the championship and therefore wrecked everything," he explained.

"And now we must prepare for a French side without knowis the depth of their motivation after losing to Wales. We have shown ourselves that it is possible to bounce back almost overnight from a substandard performance. For that reason, France will be very dangerous." France will be very dangerous."

ENGLAND (v France, Free Nuclous'
Champtonsilp, at Twickenham, 20
March): M Ferry (Bath): D Bees (Sale).

J Williamson (Newcastie), J Gascott
(Bath), D Luger (Haricquins): M Catt
(Bath), K Bracken (Saracers): J Leosard
(Haricquins), R Coctaril, D Garforth, M
Johnson (all Leicester), T Rodber
(Northampton), R Hill (Saracers), L Dalagilo (Wasps, capt), M Back (Leicester),
Replacements: M Beal (Northampton),

B J Mather (Sale), M Dawron
(Northampton), M Corry (Leicester),
Racker (Newcastie), V Ubegn (Bath), M
McCarthy (Gouccster). Swinging through the trees at Sunningdale W Indies



Force of nature: A competitor in the Sunningdale Foursomes tees off at the sixth hole yesterday. Among the first-round winners was the former racing driver Nigel Mansell, who, with fellow amateur John Putt, beat the Kent professionals Paul Sherman and Larry Batchelor 2 & 1

SPORTING DIGEST

end Test drought

THE WEST INDIES took threequarters of an hour to complete victory over Australia by 10 wickets in the second Test at Sabina Park yesterday. The win ended a depressing sequence of six defeats and, according to captain Brian Lara, regained their pride and self-belief.

Courtney Walsh, their longest-serving player in his 108th Test, took his overall tally of Test wickets to 410 when Jason Gillespie was caught down the leg side off the glove by the wicketkeeper Ridley Jacobs. Nehemiah Perry, the offspinner in his first Test, ended the innings with his fifth wicket when he had Stuart MacGill caught at leg slip. The West Indies openers then needed four balls to complete the formality of scoring three runs.

Lara, whose devastating 213 nspired the triumph, was "elated and relieved" at the result but cautioned against proclaiming it an instant renaissance of a team that had been at its lowest ebb only eight days earlier following a second innings total of 51 and a drubbing by 312 runs in the first Test.

"Most importantly, we've gained the confidence that we need and that has been lacking for the past five or six months in West Indies cricket," he said, "I'd like to say it is the turning point for us but now we've got the confidence, we've got to put together a greater team effort with bat, ball and especially in the field to ensure we dominate the remainder of the series."

Lara more than any contemporary cricketer knows how fickle the fates can be and is taking nothing for granted. "Australia are capable of bouncing back. They're going to come back even barder in the next Test match."

Lara's performance not only virtually determined the outcome of the match, but also guaranteed his captaincy for the remainder of this series as well as this summer's World Cup. The West Indies Cricket Board, disturbed by the 5-0 whitewash in the preceding Test series in BY TONY COZIER

in Port of Spain

Australia 256 & 177 West Indies 431 & 3-0 West Indies win by 10 wickets

probation as captain for only two Tests. That issue was settled ouce Lara started to plunder the Australian bowling on Sunday afternoon.

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Such stability will strength en the West Indies as will the likely return of two regulars, the all-rounder Carl Hooper and Shivnarine Chanderpaul, the left-handed batsman, for the third Test in Bridgetown from 26 to 30 March, Hooper has been in Adelaide with his Australian wife since the end of the South Africa tour while their infant son recovered from illness. Chanderpaul has been restricted by damaged shoulder ligaments.

In their absence, the West Indies' team in this Test was the most inexperienced since Kerry Packer hijacked all their leading players in 1977. It rendered their triumph all the more remarkable.

Perry and the batsman Lincoln Roberts were making their debuts, the batsmen Suruj Ragoonath, who hit the winning runs, and Dave Joseph and the left-arm fast bowler Pedro Collins, were in their second Tests. It simply underscored the enormity of the West Indies' win.

AUSTRALIA - First Immings 256 (5 R Wough 100, M & Wough 67; C A Walsh 4-55). WEST INDIES - First landings 431 (B C Lara 213,) C Adams 94; G D McGrath 5

Bowling: McGrath 0.3-0-3-0. Umpires: 5 R Bucknor (WI) and P Wilk

(eng).
First Test: Australia won by 312 runs
Tahd test: March 26 to 30 (Bridgetown

Wigan decide not to risk Smith for Leeds return

TONY SMITH has been ruled out of Wigan's revenge mission

Headingley in an otherwise cide this week where to play to move it, but the booking for been one of Gateshead's high unchanged side as Wigan try to their match against Wigan on the athletics at the stadium was profile supporters in the Northat Leeds on Friday. The Great Britain scrum-half, who broke a bone in his ankle in a pre-sea-Wigan coach, John Monie, is resigned to him being out.

with the side if he was going to have overcome his hamstring play and our physic just wasn't injury. Rob Ball stands by to re- around the play-the-ball. happy with him," said Monie. place him on the bench at

BY DAVE HADFIELD

"We have another two weeks

son friendly at Halifax, was before our next game after earmarked for a return, but the Leeds, so it's not a good risk." Simon Haughton has also "He had to be able to train in training after seeming to

avenge their Silk Cut Challenge Cup defeat.

The match will be the first agreed between the League's Director of Referees, Greg Mchad a setback, turning his ankle Callum, and Super League coaches covering the interpretation of rules, especially

Gateshead Thunder will de-

1 August, which they must move from their normal home at the Gateshead Internationplayed under a new charter al Stadium because of a veterans' athletics meeting.

Typecastle in Edinburgh and Sunderland's Stadium of Light are the venues under discussion for one of the new Super League club's plum fixtures. "It's unfortunate that we have

made two years ago," said the Thunder's chief executive, Shane Richardson, "What we now want to do is take the maximise its impact."

Tynecastle successfully staged a Super League match between London and Bradford last season, while the Sunderland manager, Peter Reid, has

profile supporters in the Northconcern to the Thunder is the fact that their captain, Kerrod Walters, may miss the match at match to the place that will St Helens in 11 days' time because of his injured groin.

Nick Halafihi, who left St Helens' backroom staff earlier this month, has been appointed director of development at the Rugby League.

Minali injured in multiple crash

THE LEADING sprinters Nicola Minali and Mario Cipollini were among several riders injured in the seventh stage of the Italian Tirreno to Adriatico race.

Steven De Jong of the Netherlands slipped past to win the stage, while Michele Bartoli, the world No 1, retained his narrow overall lead with one day left in the event, a warmup for the World Cup season.

CYCLING

With around 75 metres left, a crash vesterday at the end of Minali, Cipollini and Fabio Baldato touched bicycles and toppled to the road. Minali, who won two stages at the 1997 Tour de France, siammed into roadside advertising signs before colliding with Giuseppe Palumbo. Minali was taken to hospital with leg injuries and a

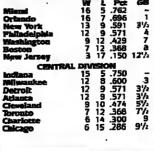
Baldato may have a broken collar-bone, while Palumbo injured a shoulder. Cipollini escaped with bruises and cuts.

De Jong covered the 160 kilometres from Alba Adriatica to Civitanova Marche on the Adriatic coast in 4hr 19min 10sec. He edged out Poland's Zbigniew Spruch at the finish. Bartoli, the defending World Cup champion, was 10th across

Tegia Loroupe, of Kenya, will defend her Bupa Great Caledonian run ti-tle next month, despite the 10km race, which has been designed within the royal estate at Balmoral, coming only a week after the Rotterdam Marathon. Last year in Rotterdam Marathon. terdam, Loroupe set a world marathon best time of 2hr 20min 47sec, a performance which gaired her a special achievement award from the international Amateur Athletic Federation.

ATHLETICS

EASTERN CONFERENCE ATLANTIC DIVISION



FOOTBALL

7.30 unless stated EUROPEAN CUP

SUROPEAN CUP

OUARTER-PAIALS SECOND LEG

Dynamo Riev (1) v R Madrid (1) (7.45)

Internazionale (0) v Man Utd (2) (7.45)

Kaiserslautem (0) v B Munich (2) (7.45)

Olympiakos (1) v Juventus (2) (7,45) ...

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL

LEAGUE: Clachnacuddin v Keith (8.0): Fort William v Forres Mechanics: Hunt-ly v Fraserburgh: Rothes v Pererhead

(8.0).

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Midland Didsion: Pager Rangers v Moor Green; Sollhull Borough v Sutton Coinfield.
Southern Division: Brackley v Baldock.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE Pre-

mier Division: wich Borough.

es & Journal Highland

NATIONWIDE CONFERENCE Forest Green v Yeovil (7.45)

BOWLS MONREYS HOUSE BY W. L.S.
MONREYS HOUSE BY THE REMAINIONAL INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP (Belfast):
England by Welles 116-93 (Eng skips
first E Bessell bt D Rowlands 19-16; D
Hankin by J Ackiand 19-16; J. Royancy lost
to M Tanner 12-17; O Hunt by 5 Diker 1714; K Strutt lost to L Evers 18-22. B Adderson by A Dainton 31-8).

PACIFIC DIVIS

BOXING Shea Neary's fifth defence of his World Boding Union light-welter-weight title against the American Mike Griffith in Dublin on 17 April has been postponed after the Liv-erpudian picked up a hand injury in training. CRICKET

Middlesex have re-signed Mike Rose-berry from Durham. The 32-year-old opening batsman had 10 seasons at

Lord's before leaving to captain his native county four years ago.

ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL (Dhaka, Bangkladesh): Pakistan 293 for 7 (50 overs; Seed Anwar 64, inzamam-ul-haq 70): Bangladesh 141 (40.5 overs). Pakistan aron by 152 runs.

CYCLING The German rider Carsten Wolf has been suspended for six months for The German rider Carsten Wolf has been suspended for six months for failing a drugs test at the Grenoble six days race last October.

TERRENO-ADRIANTO RACE Seventh stage (160km, Alba Adriantica to Christopa Riarche): 15 De Jongh (Neth) 4hr 19min (10sec: 2 2 Spruch (Pol); 3 F Guidi (It); 4 L Michaelsen (Den); 5 E Zabel (Ger); 6 A Peracol (It); 7 Simon (Fr); 8 A Edo (Sp); 3 L Guidi (It); 10 M Bartol (It) at same time. Overall stagedings: 1 Bartol 31hr 39min 16sec; 2 0 Rebellin (It) +9sec; 3 5 Garzelf (It) +14; 4 L Jalabert (Fr) +21: 5 1 Gonzalez (Sp) +30; 6 A Spezialeni (It) +1min 56sec; 7 8 Hamburger (Den) +3:57: 6 C Jenner (NZ) +4:26; 9 O Camerizad (Swit) 5/t: 10 O Casaronto (It) +4:27.

FOOTBALL The German Karl Heinz Feldkamp has replaced John Toshack as coach of the Turkish club, Besiktas.

Paul Barnes, the Huddersfield Town striker, has joined First Division ri-vals Bury for £50,000. Tom Cowan, the Huddersfield Town full-back, yesterday joined Burnley for a nominal sum. Hibernian have signed Liverpool's re-serve goalkeeper Tony Warner on a two-week trial.

Leeds have appointed lan Broomfield as their new chief scout as succes-sor to lan McNell. OUARTER-FINALS SECOND LEG

Chieso 43, 59
Veron 48
Bafto pen 69
Parms won 7-2 on aggregote
SCOTTISH LEAGUE THIRD DIVISION:
Postponed: Dumbarton v Cowdenbeath.
ANON RISURGANCE COMBEDIATION First:
Division: Colchester 2 Crystal Palace 1:
Reading 0 Chariton 1.
POINTING LEAGUE Third Division: Halifes: Rochdale 2.
RONDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Poncing
Langue Premier Division: Blackburn 1
Marchester Utd 0: Studerland 1 Aston Vilis 1. Unizioned Langue Premier Division: Blackburn 1
Marchester Utd 0: Studerland 1 Aston Vilis 1. Unizioned Langue Premier Division: Ended 1
Individual Colombia Division: Atherstone 2
Salisbury 0: Seathers Division: Atherstone 2
Salisbury 0: Seathers Division: Division: Despenham & Recbridge 1 Harrow
Borough 0: North Wisstern Trains Langue
First Division: Cherce 5 Holter Old Boys
1. Screenflx Division: Recording 1 Harrow
Borough 0: North Wisstern Trains Langue
First Division: Cherce 5 Holter Old Boys
1. Screenflx Division (Manchester Und).
REPUBLIC OF RELAND SOUAD (Enrepeate Championship Qualifying Group
Eight soatch v Mancadenia, Shople, 27
March): Given (NewCastel), Kelly
(Sheffield Utd), Irwin (Manchester Und).
Carr (Rotenbern), Barbs (Lebe, Kelly
(Sheffield Utd), Irwin (Manchester Und).
Carr (Rotenbern), Brass (Lebe, Kelly
(Sheffield Utd), Irwin (Manchester Und).
Carr (Rotenbern), Brass (Parchy), Bufflegas
(Blackburn), Kendall (Palace), Green
(Monchester Utd), SheReer (Blackburn), Roberts (Swarten), Williams
(Blackburn), Kendall (Palace), Green
(Monchester (Brasse), Hopking (Wills),
Isame (OPR), Blanswell (Liverpool), GeBar (Everton), Danies (Peteroonugh),
Roberts (Swarten), Williams (Southampton), Roberts (Swarten), Hopkins (William),
Harnalaswe (Carolli),

NATIONNIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE R.

RUGBY UNION RUGBY UNIOTE

INCLANDA (In France A, Redrich, Friday): C Catling (Gloucester): L Lloyd
(Leicester), N Bustroms (London Irish), P

Mensah (Harlequins), T Undermoster
(Menscate): M Suspletori: (Gloucester), S

Bestom (Gloucester); G Romerue (Leicester), G Cauter (Saracens), D Crompton
(Richmond), M Corumeta (Gloucester), R

Fidler (Gloucester), B Charles (Richmond). A Vauder (Füchmond), T Diprose (Sur-cers, capt), Replacements: J Essens (Bediord, A Ming (Mappo, IN Whishe (Har-lequins), S Ojosobi (Gioucester), S Shaw (Mapps), T Woodinan (Gioucester), M Re-gan (Bath).

SPEEDWAY Sky Sports are to screen live Elite League matches this season. Coven-try's home meeting with Wolver-hampton opens the 20-week schedule on 13 May.

SUMO
SPRING GRAND TOURNAMENT (Opaka, Japan) Third day of 15: Asanowaka
(von 1, lost 2) br flyokutenho (jaryo) (1-2),
Wakanojo (2-1) bt Kalho (2-1); Goloro
(1-2) br Asanosho (1-2); Ohinode (2-1) bt
Ognishiki (1-2); Tokitsuumi (2-1) bt
Hamanoshima (1-2); Tokitsuumi (2-1) bt
Horonyu (2-1); Garyui (1-2) br Microumi (2-1); bt
Horonyu (2-1); Garyui (1-2) br Microumi (2-1); bt
Ibt Hignonumi (1-2); Denikasuga (1-2) bt
Hignonumi (1-2); Denikasuga (1-2); Asanosmin (2-1); bt
Rochiazuma (2-1) bt Noconowaka (1-2); Asanosmin (2-1); bt Hignonumi (1-2); Asanosmin (2-1); bt Chipolana (1-2); by default;
Kalo (2-1) bt Chipolana (1-2); by default;
Kalo (2-1) bt Chipolana (1-2); by default;
Call (2-1); bt Chipolana (1-2); bt
Wakanoshana (1-2); Roconishiki (1-2); bt
Wakanoshana (1-2).



 No Contracts/Line Pre-Use may Topo Phot
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possible broken right wrist. the line.

.. 100% Some good skiing 80

..90% Gd on upper runs 100 140

Saas Fee95% Spring conditions 85 300

40 170

70 100

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NEA: Toronto 89 Charlotte 82; Orlando 74 Philadelphia 73; New York 108 Min-neuidee 102; Utah 90 Minnesota 83; Ceve-land 89 Chicago 85 (ot); Portland 106 Collas 91; Dener 110 Vancouver 84; Sacra-mento 111 Golden State 105.

BASKETBALL

W L Pot GB 16 5 .762 -16 7 .696 1 13 9 .591 31/3 12 9 .571 4 9 12 .429 7 7 12 .368 2 3 17 .150 121/3

TODAY'S FIXTURES

UNIJET SUSSIDE COUNTY LEAGUE
First Division: East Preston v Chichester
City, Hassocies v Langney Sports.
JEMSON WESSER LEAGUE First
Divisions Cowes Sports v Gosport Borough: Hamble ASSC v Whitchurch.
ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN
LEAGUE First Division: Guisborough
Town v Billingham Synthonia.

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Guisborough Town v Billingham Synthonia.

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP Fifth-round replay: Crystal Palace v Arsenal. PONTINS LEAGUE Prumier Division: 8 Birratingham v Stoke (7.15): Nottingham Forest v Derby (7.0). First Division: Bolton v Tranmer (7.0): Manchesser City v Grimsby (7.0): Alididesbrough v Wolverhampton (7.0). Second Division: Biacipool v Newassic (7.0); Huddersheld v York (7.0): Scarborough v Notts County (2.0): Laegue Cup quarter-flush Darington v Bradford (7.0).

ANON INSURAINGE COMBINATION First Division: Bury Manufact Combination (7.0): Cambridge v Southampton (2.0): Crystal

Palace v Colchester; Gillingham v West Harn; Luton v Wycombe (2.0); Oxford v Barnet; Peterborough v Boumemouth (7.0); Watford v Oueen's Park Rangers.

NORTHERN FORD PREMIERSHIP: Featherstone v Widnes (7.30); Hull Kingston Rovers v Oldham (7.30); White-haven v Lancashire Lynx (7.30). ANGLO-MELSH FREENDLY: Gloucest v Cardiff (7.45). CLUB MATCHES: Combined London 08 v Surrey (7.30) (at Esher); Richmond XV v Royal Navy (7.30) (at the Athletic Ground).

BASKETBALL BUDWEISER LEAGUE: Birmingham Bullets v Edinburgh Rocks (7.30) (of Aston Villa); Worthing Bears v Derby Storm (8.0).

OTHER SPORTS **GOLF:** Sunningdale Foursomes.

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Ferguson's laughing cavaliers

which confirmed the primacy of the partnership between Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole and killed off any lingering hopes the likes of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Teddy Sheringham may have harboured. The momeot when, as David Beckham's other half might have put

it, two became one hell of a duo. The scene was the Nou Camp Stadium in November, early in the second half of a frenetic Champlons' League fixture. After the shock of conceding a first-minute goal to Barcelona, Manchester United had recovered to equalise through Yorke. Probing the left side of the home defence, Roy Keane rolled a pass inside towards the Tobagan 25 yards from goal... whereupon Cole

takes up the story.
"Dwight dummied it and as soon as be let the ball run I knew that he wouldn't stand still, that he'd make a run. So I thought I'd play a one-two. Dwight could either go on himself or knock it back to me. Fortunately for me, he knocked it 2-0 first-leg lead over Inback," Unfortunately for Ruud Hesp, Barca's Dutch goalkeeper, Cole knocked it past

The scorer's analysis talks of

Yorke and Cole enter the San Siro as possibly the best strike force in United's history. By Phil Shaw

pect of the build-up was the ap-parent lack of deliberation and the part played by intuition, or "telepathy" as Wilf McGuinness, the former United player and manager, characterises it. When Yorke stepped over the ball be knew instinctively that Cole was behind him and moved instantaneously for the pass which was duly played.

Cole, in turn, anticipated precisely where to run for the reciprocal pass from Yorke. In a matter of seconds the ball nestied in the Catalan net, prompting Alan Hansen to hail the goal as "a masterpiece".

Since that game, which finished 3-3, the understanding that was blossoming between United's front two has hurgeoned, perhaps eveo beyond Alex Ferguson's expectations. Beckham, whose crosses enabled Yorke to give United a ternazionale in their European Cup quarter-final, says the pair's perpetual motioo make

Going into the second leg in what he "thought" he would do. Milan to night, Yorke has

However, the most striking as- amassed 26 goals and Cole 21. The latter's brace in Saturday's win at the club who sold him for £7m, Newcastle, means it is already the most prolific partnership of the Ferguson era, overtaking the mark set by Eric Cantona and Mark Hughes in 1993-94. Yet what really sets apart the double act which could bring the Treble to Old Trafford is the transparent pleasure Yorke and Cole take in making goals for

> In his mind's eye McGuinness, a former Busby Babe and England player, can still see Tommy Taylor in tandem with Dennis Viollet before Munich. He worked with Best, Law. Charlton and Kidd, and admired the link between Hughes and Brian McClair. But he has no hesitation in hailing Yorke and Cole as Old Trafford's best attacking partnership "by a

> "The funny thing is that they're basically similar players," he says. "They're not the classic pairing of a strong spearhead and a foil who feeds off him. They're both fast, darting strikers whose biggest asset is movement off the ball and sharpness in the goal area.

They've both got quick feet. They're both good at shielding the ball, with surprising upperbody strength. Both turn well. and they're better in the air than you'd expect for their

The fact that they are also bosom pals - Yorke rang Cole when he could not find the training ground on his first day and they immediately hit it off - has enhanced their relationship on the pitch, according to McGuinness. "It shouldn't mat-Eddie Colman, hut then we were all friends in that side."

Now covering the club as a broadcaster, a role which took that the empathy stems from him to Barcelona and will also find him in Milan, McGuinness

ing them to hotels. Culturally,

their backgrounds could

has surprised those who ex-Cole but not vice versa. The former tends to drift into deeper positions and to go wide more.

Magilton. Also omitted is the

Leicester centre-back Gerry

Taggart, who, like Magilton,

has been included in the stand-

often he is the beneficiary of Hoddle's caveat that Cole Cole's new-found selflessness, most recently at Chelsea in the FA Cup.

needs too many chances to

score, believes there is still a

question mark over him

against top-class opposition.

McGuinness argues that is no

longer the case: "Andy hasn't

really had a chance to prove

himself with England, hut at

European level he's blossom-

ing due to this partnership.

That goal in Spain was a per-

In the San Siro, Cole could be

roles. Inter, doubtless rein-

when the gaps should appear,"

says McGuinness. "It was cru-

cial that Inter didn't get an

away goal. With Yorke and Cole,

you're always confident that

There is also a recall for Sun-

derland's Andy Melville after a

fine season with the Nationwide

First Division leaders, while the

Nottingham Forest goalkeeper

Mark Crossley comes hack

after a long absence through in-

fect example."

Yorke is the more complete performer. The audaciously chipped goal over Ed de Goey at Stamford Bridge was no one-off; he had the confidence and the skill to dink a similar shot over David Seaman from the penalty spot for Villa against Arsenal last season. Now that he is playing for a side who teod to dominate full range of his attacking talents.

"I could understand why the club were so keen to get him," McGuinness says, "even though John Gregory got them

Parma's panache banishes **Bordeaux**

Parma win 7-2 on aggregati

HERNAN CRESPO and Enrico Chiesa scored twice each as Parma thrashed Bordeaux 6-0 yesterday to overturn their narrow first-leg deficit and ease into the Uefa Cup semi finais.

Both Crespo's goals were set up for him by the defender Paolo Vanoli in the 37th and 66th minutes, while Chiesa scored with a long-range shot in the 43rd and rounded off a counterattack by converting a pass from Crespo in the 59th.

Crespo's compatriot, Juan Veron struck a brilliant free-kick just after half-time, and Abel Balbo made it four for the Argentinian contingent with a late penalty.

Bordeaux, who lead the French league, arrived at Tar dini stadium intent on protecting the 2-1 advantage they gained in the first leg two weeks ago, but their defensive strat-

egy backfired. Victory kept alive Parma's quest for a rare treble; they are in the Italian Cup final and are tied for second place in Serie A. But the 1995 Uefa Cup-winners will have to play their semi-final first leg without defensive stalwart, Fabio Cannavaro, who collected his yellow card of the tournament after being booked for handball in the 54th minute.

Otherwise, everything went Parma's way. In the 37th minute, Diego Fuser's pass found Vanoli oo the left, he drew the goalkeeper, Ulrich Rame, and slid the ball inside for Crespo's first. Then Vanoli's dummy run left space for Chiesa to collect Dino Bag-

gio's long pass for the second. Just after half-time, Veron curled in his free-kick to make it 3-0 and Chiesa took Crespo's through ball to fire in the fourth. Then Crespo scored from Vanoh's nod-down of a 40-yard pass by the French World Cup winner, Lilian Thuram,

Balbo got the last goal, with two minutes to go, after the Bordeaux defender Nisa Saveliic. standing near the penalty spot, inexplicably grabbed the ball out of the air with both hands.

"United are going to have to work hard when the Italians treatment

BY DAMIAN SPELLMAN

United will score, whoever or ROB LEE has asked Newcastle to set a fair price if they intend selling him. The 33-year old England midfielder has made just one start since Boxing Day through a combination of injury and the form of the German Dietmar Hamann and the reju-venated Welsh international Gary Speed in central midfield.

Newcastle would probably want £2m for the veteran and Lee hopes the high price will out deter interested clubs. "Players don't have a say in how much they are worth, but if the club is looking to sell me, I would hope they would set a fair price," he said.

With the loss of the captaincy to Alan Shearer. Lee admits that the writing is on the wall. That message was driven home to him when he appeared as a secood-half substitute in the 2-1 home defeat by Manchester United last weekend.

Wimbledon's £7.5m striker "Dietmar and Gary have done very well lately, hut that doesn't stop me being a good player," he said. "When I came on the other day, we just seemed to get in each other's way. I can't really envisage the three of us playing together un-less we played with wing-backs.

"My problems started with that Achilles injury. I've had th longest spell of my career on the sidelines, but I still feel I'm one of the best players at this club and have a lot to offer."

Lee joined United from his only other club, Chariton, for what proved to be a bargain £700,000 in September 1992, first playing wide on the right before moving into the middle to establish his partnership

with David Batty.

Anumber of clubs have been linked with Lee, although he has spoken to none. The fee could be a problem but be is not getting involved in any negotiations.

Arsène Wenger has added another prodigy to Arsenal's growing teenage ranks. The latest arrival is German youth international Moritz Volz. signed from Schalke 04 ma deal reported to be worth £150,000a-year to Germany's former under-15 captain from the start



Dwight Yorke (left) and Andy Cole celebrate another magic moment for their prolific partnership

THE FERGUSON YEARS: A STRIKING IMPROVEMENT

Manchester United's leading scorers to all competitions'

1986-87

Peter Davenport 16, Norman Eric Cantona 25, Mark Hughes Whiteside 10, Frank Stapleton 9. 20, Ryan Giggs 17.

11. Gordon Strachan 9. 1988-89 Mark Hughes 16, Brian McClair

16, Rryan Robson 8. 1989-90 Mark Hughes 15, Mark Robins 10. Brian McClair 8.

1990-91 Mark Hughes 21, Brian McClair 1991-92

Brian McClair 24, Mark Hughes 14. Andre Kanchelskis 8. 1992-93

striker. Keith O'Neill, has been

recalled to the Republic of Ire-

land squad for the Group Eight

European Championship qual-

also called up the uncapped

his 20-man travelling squad.

ing Norwich for Middlesbrough

O'Neill, on the brink of leav-

fraud squad to investigate Mark the deal.

Zagreh and promptings from with a view to ascertaining

Viduka's transfer from Croatia

Zagreb, according to newspa-

Viduka went back to his

native Australia immediately

following the 23m deal, claim-

play. Despite the demands of

Uefa, European football's gov-

erning body, the Celnc owner.

Fergus McCann, refused to pay

Viduka's transfer fee, although

it now appears that he feared

ing that he was too stressed to

per reports.

THE MIDDLESBROUGH-BOUND BY ALAN NEXON

Brian McClair 31, Bryan Robson Andre Kanchelskis 15, Eric Cantona 13, Andy Cole 12, Mark

> 1995-96 Eric Cantona 19, Paul Scholes 14. Andy Cole 13.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer 19, Eric Cantona 15, David Beckham 11. 1997-98 Andy Cole 26, leddy Shering ham 14, David Beckham 11.

1998-99 Dwight Yorke 26, Andy Cole 21, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer 15 (so far). Mark Hughes 16, Ryan Giggs 11, *English clubs banned from Europe 1986-87 to 1989-90 inclusive

Cole are always first to congratulate each other after a goal. While pointing out that Cole's link with Cantona was not exactly unproductive, he acknowledges that there was no comparable rapport.

has noticed bow Yorke and

"These two play for each other," he says. "Strikers normally have to be selfish, or at least single-minded, but they love helping each other. And the way it's going, if one hits the bar, the other sticks in the re-

Their friendship is such that the other players reputedly tease them about how often ter if you don't get on with a they pass to one another. They certain team-mate. But if two train together a lot-the hardplayers are good huddies, they er they practise, the more teledid with Bobby Chariton and a famous maxim about luck in golf - as well as hanging out with each other

The simplistic explanation is the fact that both are black and

For Williams, 28, the in-

ternational call has come late

after a solid performance in the

B international against Wales

last month. McMenemy said:

"Mark gave an impressive and

disciplined show in that game.

We were sufficiently impressed

to have no hesitation in pro-

moting him to the senior squad

The Reading centre-back

Barry Hunter, who has been on

loan at Southend, is recalled to

the squad. He has had an ap-

for these games."

ers". Yet Cole is a Nottingham boy who spent much of his adolescence in Loodon after joining Arsenal, whereas Yorke used to keep his family in the West Indies above the poverty line by catching crabs and sell-

scarcely be more contrasting. Whatever the reason, the bond has brought Cole out of his shell. Graham Taylor, who took Yorke to England as a teenager after spotting him on an Aston Villa tour, once remarked that it would be nice to see Cole smile. Yorke, of course, could grin for England (were he not committed to Trinidad & Tobago), and his influence may

account for his partner's less pected Yorke to provide for

asked to operate as a lone striker, with Yorke and the wide session, we are seeing the players taking more withdrawn forced by Ronaldo, are sure to throw men forward.

In playing terms, the pairing But he looks a snip now, if you can say that about someone who cost £12.6m; a classic United player. He was a very good player at Villa – now he looks a

Alan Hansen, echoing Glenn

Giggs comes through his two big games for Manchester Unit-ed this week so that he can make his comeback in his country's crucial Euro 2000 qualifier in Switzerland on 31 March.

Giggs, in action against Internazionale tonight and Ever-

However, there is a question mark over Giggs' fitness following his recent return from another Achilles problem for an Old Trafford side now chasing the Premiership, Champions' League and FA Cup treble, and Gould will not rest until he actually joins up with his Wales team-mates on Thursday

sults have seen them slip into the bottom half of the table, just

pension, will return to the side as captain to win his 50th cap.

THE WALES manager, Bobby Gould, is praying that Ryan

ton in the Premiership on Sunday, played in Wales' opening Group One fixture against Italy in September, a 2-0 defeat But the United player was ruled out through injury from

the two victories in Denmark and at home to Belarus which have given Wales a genuine chance of qualifying for their first major finals since the 1958 World Cup in Sweden.

he stays fit Wales' most talented player will be on the team sheet against the Swiss. That would give Gould a difficult decision over who to leave out from the side that played so well in the two October victories, culminating in a night of national pride and passion at Ninian Park when Belarus were beat-

Wales wait on Giggs' fitness for Swiss date

has been included in the stand-by panel.

REFIRSLIC OF INSLAND SOLIAD [for European Championship Ossell'ying Group Eight manch against Macade-nta in Skoppe, 27 March): Given (New-castel, Refly (Sheff Unf), Irwin (Man Unf), Carr (fortenham), Harte (Leeds), Stanston (Liverpool), Cantingham (Nim-bledon), Breen (Coventry): Babb (Liver-pool), Rasma (Man Urd), McAbear (Slacidourn), Wissellia (Charlior), McLoughim (Portsmouth), Cursicy (De-by), Duff (Blackburn), Casten (Sunderland), Cascarino (Nancy), Wanne (Wolves), O'Haffi (Norwich), Commoliy (Wolves), WISSELLIAD SOULAD (to Face Germanny in the European Cham-NORTHERR BRELAND SOUAD (to Face Germany in the European Championship qualifier at Windsor Park, Bailrast, 27 March): Taylor (Fulham), Fettis (Backburn), Hoghes (Newtostie), Milliams (Chesterfield), Morrow (CPR), Patterson (Christoffield), Morrow (CPR), Patterson (Christoffield), Morrow (Reading), Morlock (Man Coy), Manuedy (Watford), Romand (CPR), Hanser (Reading), McCarthy (Bhrisigham), Lomas (Westham), Soumer (Sheff Wed), Leasaon (Leicester), Hoghes (Mirchiedon), Dourie (CPR), Quinn (West Brom), Robinson (Bournerouth).

John Hartson, who has recovered from persistent injury and suspension problems to claim a place in the Dons' side, is included for the first time since last summer's games in Malta and Tunisia. The Norwich youngster Craig Bellamy, who scored a

superb winning goal in Denmark, is also named in the squad, while Mark Delaney. There is no question that if Aston Villa's recent signing from Cardiff, is in the stand-by party along with Preston's Kurt The under-21 side, who play

in Winterthur on 30 March, includes the Liverpool 19-year-old youth player Layton Maxwell for the first time, while Everton's John Oster also makes his comeback at international level

comeback at international level after SUSPENSION.
WALES SCHAD (for European Charaptembles Dualitying Group One match against Switzerland in Zurich, 31 Narch): Joses (Southampton), Mard (Notts County), Grossley (Nottm Forest), Robinson (Charlton), Jenkins (Huddersfield), Barnard (Barnsley), Trollope, Symous, Coleman (all Fuharn), Metallin (Sunderland), Williams (Wolves), Johnson (Nottm Forest), Savage (Lekester), Speed (Newcastle), Hughas (Southampton), Pembridge, Sammders (both Benfica), Blaike (Blackburn), Harrsoon (Winbleton), Giggs (Man Utd), Bellamy (Norwich), Scandbyr Copne (Tranner), Marriotz (Sunderland), Delaney (Aston Villa), Page (Wapford), Edwards (Nottm Econol Chapter (Sunderland))

he was being set up. One newspaper reported that the player himself warned Mc-Cann that part of the cash would go directly to officials of the Croatian club. The paper claimed to have a copy of a letter signed by the Celtic director Fergus Sweeney which proves the Parkhead club called for a

donians in Skopje in a World Cup qualifier in April 1997. "That result doeso't matter ifying tie with Macedonia in now. We didn't do ourselves Skopje on 27 March. The Irish justice that day," said Mcmanager, Mick McCarthy, has Carthy. "It's a huge game for us and vitally important. Sours defender Stephen Carr to Yugoslavia play Croatia on the same night in another Group Eight game. But 1 won't be concerned about that result if for £700,000, missed the 2-0 vicwe can win in Macedonia.

tory over Paraguay in Dublin on 10 Fehruary because of an priority against the Macedoankle injury. Carr gets his nians, or at least not be beaten." chance because of injuries McCarthy has put the Bury which rule out Gary Kelly. Curgoalkeeper Dean Kiely, Brad-

tis Fleming, Jeff Kenna and McCarthy will be anxious that there is no repeat of the shock 3-2 defeat by the Mace- case of injuries.

CELTIC HAVE called in the senior police investigation into scored four goals in his first two

The letter stated: "My club

is understandably disturbed at

the events surrounding Vidu-

ka's transfer, and the depths of

its concern can be gauged by

the fact that the circumstances

have been reported for inves-

tigation to the British police

whether there are any fraudu-

leot elements in those circum-

stances. Viduka has advised

Celtic that certain Croatian of-

ficials will receive part of this

The letter is believed to have

been lodged with world foot-

ball's governing body. Fifa, al-

though following initial

inquiries the police could find

oo wrongdoing to substantiate

Zagreh have so far received

Celtic's fears.

Three points has to be the

ford's midfielder Gareth Whalley, the Wimbledon winger Mark Kennedy and Fulham's Steve Finnan on standby in

The Liverpool defender Dowie and James Quinn and Steve Staunton will be able to we'll take it from there." take his place in the travelling party having recovered from a back injury suffered in Saturday's 3-2 defeat by Derby. The Northern Ireland man-

O'Neill wins Republic recall

ager, Lawrie McMenemy, has called up the Bournemouth striker Stephen Robinson and Chesterfield's defender Mark Williams for the games against Germany and Moldova. Robinson, who has been

linked with a move to Fulham, is the latest player to be tried to answer Northern Ireland's goal famine.

games for Celtic. A final ruling

The Dundee midfielder Dar-

on Viduka's transfer is expect-

ed from Fifa later this week.

iusz Adamczuk, who was sent

off in Saturday's defeat by Dun-

fermline, has been banned for

six games by the Scottish Foot-

A report from the referee

Hugh Dallas has disclosed that

Adamczuk was giveo two red

cards, the first for a second

booking and the second for his

remarks to the referee. This

meant he was automatically

suspended for two games and,

as he passed the 16-point

threshold, an extra four games

ball Association.

were added.

son: "We are always in the market for a goalscorer.

palling 12 months with injury but is now well on the road to McMenemy said of Robinrecovery. Also included is the Stephen has shown that he

Sheffield Wednesday midfielder Danny Sonner, but there is Milne committed to Viduka transfer probe

revitalising Aberdeen ABERDEEN'S CHAIRMAN, manager, Paul Hegarty. "Money Stewart Milne, has pledged to is not the problem," said Milne. find the necessary money to help the Pittodrie club improve their poor position in Premier

The Dons suffered a humiliating 5-1 defeat - their worst home reverse in 38 years - to Celtic on Sunday, after which their captain, Derek Whyte. questioned Milne's desire to halt an alarming slide. Whyte claimed Aberdeen need to start buying players in the £2m bracket if they are to regain their past status. But, so far Milne has sanctioned only the £250,000 transfer of Andreas Mayer from

Rosenburg in January.
While Milme insisted the Adamczuk will not be back until the final three games of players must share the blame the season as Dundee struggle for a run of depressing results. to avoid relegation from the he confirmed that finance will 2900,000 for a player who has Premier League. be found to fund the plans of the six points off the bottom.

"It is finding the right players. We badly need reinforcements, particularly in defensive areas. But I won't accept other players using that as an excuse for how things are going. The players must share responsibility for the position we are in."

Aberdeen have conceded 48 goals this season - the worst record in the Premier League - much to the concern of Whyte, "I feel embarrassed because I have rarely lost 5-1 in my career, let alone at home," he said. "The sort of players we need might cost £2m, and it all now hinges on how ambitious Aberdeen really want to be." Aberdeen's poor run of re-

Gary Speed, who missed the Belarus game through sus-

THE JENNY

PITMAN FILE

Born: 11 June, 1946, one of

seven children in a Leicestershire farming family.

Early career: Left school at 15

to work as stable girl for Chris

Taylor. Married Richard Pitman and bought a yard at Hin-

ton Parva to train hunter chasers and point-to-pointers.

Re-married (to David Stait) in

First trainers' licence: 1975.

First winner under rules:

Bonidon at Southwell on 25 Au-

Chaltenham Gold Cup

Chase winners: Burrough Hill

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HI NOT COM

call for one Greg Wood on a governing authority

THE GENERAL SECRETARY of the British Boxing Board of Control, John Morris, has called for a world body to bring order to the sport.

Morris has campaigned for five years to establish a Fifastyle organisation to oversee championship bouts. The de-bate over Evander Holyfield's controversial world heavyweight championship draw with Lermox Lewis has led to calls for a worldwide reform. Morris believes a world gov-

ining body could be established with powers to enforce rules in the conduct of title fights, although promoters would still be allowed to make the deals and stage the bouts. "Fifa's job is to safeguard its

sport so that everyone can get the benefit of it and in boxing we have to project our sport in the best possible way," he said. Morris argues that the World

Boxing Council, World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation, the three orations involved in the New York controversy, are sanctioning rather than governing bodies. Each has its own regulations and a streamlined approach is needed, particularly n the United States where boxng is run by state commissions.

Morris feels a world regulatory body would have responsibility for medical provision, fight rules and the selection of judges and their supervision. He feels neutral judges are needed. "Four or five years ago I, and

the then [BBBC] president, Sir David Hopkin, wrote to all the major administrators calling on them to co-operate and we had a lot of support. There was a very favourable reaction from Japan and states within America who have benefited greatly from the work of the Associa-

tion of Boxing Commissions."
"The whole set-up has improved in the US and the ABC is a far more forceful body which is defending the interests ne sport. But what is need is funding and top professional administrators."

HUNTINGDON

Pinch 3.30 Alka international 4.10 Seize The

Day 4.40 Trouble Ahead 5.15 Club Sandwich

GOING: Soft (Good to Soft in places).

| Right-hend, level course. Run-in 200yds.
| Course is st junction of A1 and A604, Hursingdon station (service from London, King's Cross) tin. ADMISSION: SS all enclosures (today only). CAR PARKS Free.
| FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS

1.50 KEYSOE SELLING H'CAP HURDLE (CLASS G) £3,000 added 2m 5i 110yds

1 SP2-PP HELLD ME MAN (50) B Llowellyn 11 11 2 ... MY J L Llewellyn 2 68435 HOTSPUR STRIEET (44) E L Jennes 7 11 5 ... Miles S Sammerfit (7) B 3 SESSP COLUMNIL (22) (5) A Hobbs B 11 8 ... Miles S Sammerfit (7) B 4 45P802 REAL FIRE (15) M Mongher 5 10 8 ... R Williamen (5) V 5 600Fip BORNTA BLAKSHEY (85) G Balding 5 10 5 ... M Worthington 7 000-P BLETS SPUR (222) D Geraphy R 10 1 ... M Worthington 7 000-P BLETS SPUR (222) D Geraphy R 10 1 ... M Worthington 8 0665-P BAYLDRID PRINCE (37) (0) Mrs. J Barry 11 10 0 ... Miles C Dyson B

-9 declared -num wegit: 10st. True handicup weights: Baylord Prince Set 12lb, inchy-

clonay Boy Stiff 18. BETTRICE: 9-4 Real Fire, 3-1 Hotspan Street, 4-1 Cohesti, 6-1 Dumaton Heath, 10-1 Hello Me Nian, 14-1 Inchydonay Bay, 16-1 others

Real Fire has to be considered after his return to form last time but the percentage call is COLWALL, whose accord at Fontwell last month reads well enough for this assignment.

2.20 HITCHIN HAULAGE MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 5f 110yds

— 17 declared — BETTHC: 9-4 Audicias, 11-4 The Red Ractor, 4-1 Ashgee, 9-1 Accertos Style, Burn Cut, 10-1 Pounsiey Mill, 20-1 Cooleaniii, More Fun, 33-1 others

FORM VERDICT

AUDACTER ran wall in the Feetival bumper this time last year and is steedily improving over hunder. The Red Rector would probably be happier if the ground dired out.

2.55 ALCONBURY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS F) £3,000 added \$m

FORM VERDICT

B -5006F INICHTYDONEY BOY (11) Miss Z Davison 10 10 0.

BY TREVOR RANDELL

Lewis's manager, Frank Maloney, yesterday claimed that his fighter would have beaten Muhammad Ali. Maloney described Lewis as the "best finisher in the heavyweight division" and claimed that Ali would have been outmuscled by the bigger man.

Maloney also ruled out tha prospect of his fighter meeting Holyfield at Wembley in a rematch. Lewis's camp want the return to be at an alternative British venue, though, and Maloney urged the sports minister, Tony Banks, to offer his support.

"The rematch can't be at Wembley because US television controls the situation. It can come to somewhere else in Britain if we match the money that is put up by the Americans. We hope that Tony Banks will get the private sector involved." In response, Banks said: "I

am always keen to focus the eyes of the sporting world on Britain and I will, of course, help in any way I can towards securing the rematch. It is vital that boxing recovers from the body blow its reputation has received and I think that hosting the fight in Britain would go a significant way towards this."

TODAY'S NUMBER

107,000 The number of spectators

 a capacity crowd expected in Sydney's new Olympic Stadium for the Australia v New

Zealand rugby union game in the Bledisloe Cup in August. Only 2,200 tickets remain unsold. The world record is 95,000.

Morris in Pitman hands over the reins

woman who broke into a turf stronghold and established her own Garrison

THEY CALL her tha First Lady of Aintree, but it was at Cheltenham yesterday that Jenny Pitman, perhaps the most famous racehorse trainer in the country, chose to announce her retirement. Her son, Mark, will take over the licence at Weathercock House, in Lambourn, before the start of the next National Hunt season. As she delivered the news in an interview which was broadcast to the packed Festival enclosures both mother and son were in

It is just a few months since

Pitman revealed that she had successfully fought off cancer, but she said that the illness had not influenced her decision. "I am happy to say that it is nothing to do with my health," she said. "I am not ill, but this seems the right time for Mark to take over. I'm not really retiring but I won't be playing centre forward any more. I shall be on the subs' bench. I've hardly been anywhere outside this country apart from Ireland and Spain and Italy. I would love to see the big races in Australia and the United States and

Cheltenham has featured prominently in Pitman's 24year training career, most famously when she became the first - and so far only - woman to train a Gold Cup winner with the success of Burrough Hill Lad in 1984. Seven years later, Garrison Savannah won the same race, with her son in the saddle, but the following season Pitman was the focus of less flattering publicity.

She was accused of running Golden Freeze, a 150-1 nohoper, in the Gold Cup simply to upset the hot favourite, Carvill's Hill, and thereby increase the chance of her other runner, Toby Tobias, She was cleared of any malpractice at a Jockey Club inquiry, but among the thousands of punters who backed Carvill's Hill, the mem-ory can still raise hackles. "I wanted to make the an-

nouncement here at Cheltenham because of the vondernu warmin everyone the script, but he could not find thess, who p here has shown to me over the a final effort to take him past in the void National of 1993. She scends racing and is known by way mother wants me to. This successful female trainers in years," Mrs Pitman said yes- Betty's Boy and Island Chief, is also one of only two trainers every man and woman in the is the end of an era. I have rid- Britain today are in her debt.



vellous memories of Cheltenham. It would be very nice if I could go out with a winner at my final Festival as a professional trainer, but it wouldn't be the end of the world if I

For a few strides after the last fence in the William Hill National Hunt Chase, it seemed that Nahthen Lad had read

and finished only third. But Mrs Pitman does have a runner, Ginger Fox, in the County Hurdle on Thursday - the last race of the meeting. It will be a popular choice with punters.

There will be a tearful parting from Aintree too next month. Pitman trained two Grand National winners, Corbiere (1983) and Royal Athlete (1995), and also saddled Esha

to have a complete set of Nastreet. She has always been tionals, in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Mark Pitman was his mothbe able to uphold them. I am

er's assistant until setting up as a trainer in his own right in 1997. He plans to train about 80 horses at Weathercock House, including 35 recruits from his current yard. "Mother has been one of

the best-known people in the himself, be added: "I shall give ed the post first game," he said. "She tran- it my best shot and carry on the match for her, and the many

gust, 1975.

Lad (1984), Garrison Savannah King George VI Chase winner: Burrough Hill Lad (1984). Grand National Handicap Chase winners: Corbiere

(1983), Royal Athlete (1995). Scottish National Handican Chase winner. Willslord Walsh National Handicap

Chase winners: Corbiera

(1982), Burrough Hill Lad (1983), Stearsby (1986). irish Grend National Handicap Chase winner: Mudahim

Midlands National Handicap Chase winners: Watalel

la (1977), Willsford (1990). Other big winners: Bueche

Giorod (Massey Farguson Gold Cup 1980), Gainsay (Ritz Club Chase 1987), Indefence (Suprame Novices' Hurdia 1996), Master Tribe (Ladbroka 1997), Mighty Mogut (Persian War Novices' Hurdle 1992), Mudahim (Racing Post Chase 1997), Nahthen Lad (Sun Alliance Chase 1996), Princeful (Stayers' Hurdle & Long Walk Hurdle 1998). 1998: Awarded OBE for ser-

vices to racing in the New Year's Honours list.

den for mother, been her assistant trainer and we have been closely involved for a long time. If a door doesn't open she will try and open it politely. But if it still doesn't open she'll kick The sturdiest door which

Pitman pushed against was the one which insisted that After pausing to compose training racehorses was a man's job. It was, inevitably, no

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* Stephenson -

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FRANCE CO المراجع والمناج والمناج والم September 1977

| CLASS F) E3,000 access Smr 1 # 10.T Raad | 1 #k2- SHEELIN LAD (ANI)(C) Mis Tildenes Somer 11 # 10.T Raad | 1 Pass Zalaisez SPIRIT (229 (D) Mis M Jones 10 11 5 ... 8 Byrms | 3 P2500 DEST OF HONDOR (27) (D) R Lise 11 11 5 Mr P Controllo (7) B | 727 P NO PRODUME (39) (D) G McCourt 8 # 5 ... E Hashand | 3 CASS TROUNALLE (53) A limit R # 14 W Milantor | 5 CASS TROUNALLE (53) A limit R # 14 P Called | 7 SPSUP TITAN THAI (19) N Misson 10 10 8 ... R Guest | 8 ZSSN HIGH MODO (20) T George 9 10 7 R Waldey | 3 ZS-P3 MISH MODO (20) T George 9 10 7 A Samble 10 PCSSP JEALI (25) D Jurray Smr 8 10 8 S Kally (B) 1 5 SSP2 MODRILGHTER (11), C. Judeon 9 10 8 R Balliumy | 1 Product | 1 Pass Combine | 1 Called (10) | 1 Pass Combine | 1 Pass C – 12 declared – Matenum: Filet. Tate h'cop veigles: Moonlytter Set 12th, Lechusian Set 15th. GETTING: 4-1 Moonlighter 5-1 Tate Plack, 11-2 No Patisling, High Mood, 13-2 Wan Warbler, 10-1 Sheelin Lad, Zambadi Spirit, Touvallin, 16-1 others

1.50 Real Fire 2.20 The Red Rector 2.55 Tom

Planty of reasons to oppose each of the runners but WREN WAR-BLER is weighted to win a race of this nature on more than one piece of form and her third at Ludow last time received a timely boost when the runner-up won at Tisunton on Monday. No Fid-ding should be seen to much better advantage back at today's trip, while Tom Planch must go well agen it his jumping holds up. 3.30 GETECH WINDOWS LADIES H'CAP HURDLE (F) £3,000 2m 110yds

FORM VERDICT

Course is of function of A1 and A604, Hurringdon station (service from London, King's Cross) Im. ADMISSION: 95 all enclosures (today only). CAR PARIX: Free. FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS LEADING TRAINERS: K Balley 16-90 (20%), G Hubbard 17-82 (20.7%), Nits M Reveley 15-41 (36.5%), J Gifford 14-79 (7.7%), LEADING JOCKEYS: R Dumwoody 21-81 (25.9%), M A Fitzgenald 17-93 (83.9%), P Hide 15-65 (23.1%), N Williamson 14-77 (83.2%) FAVOURITES: 247-650 (44.9%). LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS: Earp (3.50), Tylo Steamer (visored).	1 32-262 ALKA INTERNATIONAL (25) (D) Mrs P Townelsy 7 2 0
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8 duting the server of the ser

FORM VERDICT CAPTAIN BIGGLES is on the upgrade and it will be interesting to see how he gets on against the ubra-related Alice Interrectional, who is much more exposed but is dropped in class. The others

4.10 THURLEIGH HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 addled 3m 2f

- 1	5-9012	SELECT THE THAT (11) (C) EAL) ALCOONER II SO
-	-	Miss M Coombe
2	26.P0	TILTY (USA) (55) (CD) A Streeter 9 17 12 Gary Lyons V
		D Ulda
3	2914 F	WEE WINDY (23) (C) J Gifford 10 11 7P Hide
_	-	EALING COURT (95) A Carroll 10 1/3
4	Suo	Deliver Cook! (b) A Card D (13
5	00F14-	THE MECCANS GONE (310) D Georgity 11 10 13 R Supple
6	50/405	THE (25) (C) J Jeriers 9 109 (C) (25) (C) (C) (C) (C) (C) (C) (C) (C) (C) (C
	ecetto.	WHITEHONNET (11) C Jeckson 9 10 5 Miss S Jackson 9
7	DOL3	WINIEDCHALL [17] COOLAGIS OF THE STATE OF
6	460212	TYLO STEAMER (6) D Wilsons 7 10 0
	520.98	GRUNGE (89) (8F) D Murray Smith 11 10 0
•	3.0.00	Caroner (no) (ex) a least a le
		- 9 declared -
	·	the star Ton handon webber Green Rd 120.

Minimum weight: 10st. True handlops weights: Grunge Set 12th. BETTING: 4-1 Salze The Day, Whitebonnet, Tylo Steemer, 5-1 Grunge, 6-1 Taly, 8-1 The Manicana Grant, 14-1 Wee Windy, Tim, 20-1 Ealing Court.

FORM VERDICT Titly could make a bold bid to compete a hat-trick in this event it he gats things his own way, but there may be improvement to come from TYLO STEAMER, who again showed stamms when a clear second at the stiff Towcester track last week.

4.40 BOLNHURST NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,000 added 2m 4f 110yds

FORM VERDICT

Although Trouble Ahead looks a promising novice chaser and proved his current well-being with an impressive win in stating ground at Tauriton less time, slight preference is for NO MORE HASSLE, who may have the batter speed at this trip. 5.15 SWINESHEAD STANDARD OPEN NH FLAT RACE (H) \$1,750 2m 110yds

FORM VERDICT

Chais Sandwich comes from a stable whose numers must always be leared in this type of race but the pick on form is ITSONLY-NEL, who is still immarize but will improve as he strengthers up and who showed planty of tenacity to win in the mud lest time.

NEWTON ABBOT HYPERION

1.55 True Fortune 2.25 Blue Blazer 3.05 Fleet-Ing Mandate 3.45 Tight Fist 4.20 Purple Ace 4.55 Ticket To The Moon 5.30 Stretching

ı	Lett-hand, sharp, course with short run-in.
	Course is N of town on A380. Newton Abbot station to
	ADMISSION: Tettersalis £11; Course £5. Accompanied under
	16s free. CAR PARK: On rails £2, remainder free.
	FIVE-YEAR STATISTICS
	III LEADING TRAINERS: M Pipe 96-855 (27%), P Hobbs 53

■ LEADING I HARRESS M PUB 95-033 (27-9), P RODOS 25-050 (104%).
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: A P McCoy 69-216 (315%), R Durwoody 43-126 (335%), J Frost 25-200 (125%), C Maude 18-114 (135%).
■ FAVOLIRITES: 27-882 (435%).
■ SAVOLIRITES: 27-882 (435%).
■ SLINKERED FIRST TIME: Mr Mad (visored, 455).

	A EE A J BLACKLER RENAULT AND EXELL
- 1	1.55 A J BLACKLER RENAULT AND EXELL H'CAP CHASE (F) £3,500 3m 2f 110yds
	1 -22F45 TRUE FORTUNE (6) V Dertnal 9 ti 10
	2 PSF431 CALLEYA STAR (16) R Alner 8 11 9
	3 F/PUZP ROCKY PARK (15) G Beiding 13 ft 7
	4 066-00 BRUSH OFF (22) Most H Kright 8 100R Firment
	5 008P-P COOL WEATHER (37) N Havin 11 100 R Karanagh B
	E dopland

- > decared - Mahimum weight: 70s. Two handloop weights: Cool Weather 8st 73fb. BETTING: 11-10 litus Fostone, 2-1 Callova Sins, 7-2 Rocky Park, 20-1 Brush Off, 25-1 Cool Weather FORM VERDICT

Catieva Star is the one runner in this weakly-contested race who ran to his best text time but he is vulnerable on the betance of his recent form of a 4b higher mark. THILE FORTURIE has good prospects of beating him at these weights if back to something close to his best, and though below form on his last two runs, the merathon trip is a plausible excuse.

2.25 LITTLE CLOSE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £4,000 added 2m 6f

or set 7b, Landard 9st 2b. BETTING: 7-4 Accomismoy Lady, 11-4 Stoe Blazer, 6-1 The Minder, 7-1 Rebeath Bay, 8-1 Elegant Des Cosess, 12 Bright Rume, 14 Landard FORM VERDICT

BLUE BLAZER has the best recent form even allowing for his being out of the handicep and, proven in these conditions, may be the answer to a trappy-locking contest. Accountancy Lady is the big unknown insertuch that she would the one to best on her best form but has just one pulled up run to her name this season.

3.05 HELENCHALLACOMBE END OFFREEDOM MAIDEN CHASE (F) 23,500 2m 110 yds

-7 declared BETTING: 9-4 Spy Dessa, 5-2 Fleeting Mandeta, 5-1 Favor Pitch, 11-2
Step in Line, 10-1 Millord Way, 25-1 Benil, 33-1 Queens Curate. FORM VERDICT FEVER PITCH has a chance on his Leicester form and is taken to best Fleeting Mandata.

3.45 HORSES FOR COURSES HANDICAP CHASE (E) \$4,000 added 2m St 110yds

FORM VERDICT

A tricky race full of horses that don't win very often. With the Frost stable coming back to form it could be worth changing the value and HOLD YOUR RANKS who has won six times round here and didn't run too badly over an inadequate 2m here last month.

4.20 A J BLACKLER PEUGEOT PARTS MAIDEN HURDLE (E) £3,000 2m 6f QP-SP BABY LANCASTER (42) M Grifin R11 4 _____ R Wildger (5) BALLOT BOX L Snock 7 11 4 ______ S Burrough CP-P BOBBY VIOLET (11) A Judies 7 11 4 ______ R Finant O McPhell (5) D O'Sullivan (7)

Brooksilow, Border Trader, 16-1 Dacelo, 25-1 others FORM VERDICT

Purple Ace has the form to win this on lest year's efforts but the worry about the trip and also his current form effer a moderate season over fances makes him worth taking on. L'IDEFIX stays well and is in recognisable form, so is marginally preferred. 4.55 TOTNES AND BRIDGETOWN NOVICE HUNTER CHASE (H) 22,000 2m 5F110yds

36P-62 MR MAD (23) Mrs D Harner 11 12 3 _____Mr P Hanner (7) V P4P-P2 NO MORE NICE GLIV (25) D Turner 10 12 3 ___Mrs A Hand (7) P62-6F POOH STICK (167) R Float 9 12 3 ___Mr A Hokkaworth (5)

— 14 declared — BETTING: 5-6 Marching Biarquis, 9-2 Resta Max, 9-1 Just Bact, 12-1 Mr Med, Flying Maria, Ticket To The Moos, 14-1 No More Nice Guy, 20-1 others

FORM VERDICT MARCHING MARQUIS has shown enough to win a small hunters' chase and this easier opportunity affords a good opening. Resita Man is much respected against him.

5.30 COME GREYHOUND RACING H'CAP HURDLE (F) \$2,400 2m 1f

BETTOKC: 2-1 Chartie Chang, 3-1 High Lose, 5-1 Mr Partacta, 6-1 Optimistic Thinks, 7-1 Almapa, 12-1 Stretching, 16-1 Brooksie. FORM VERDICT CHARLIE CHANG is in cracking form at present and despite the rise in the weights, is worth following in a race which is less than

■ Sedgefield's first meeting since three horses were killed there last month in an horrific accident caused by horses running loose was completed without incident yesterday. Two further catchment pens have been introduced to tempt riderless horses off the course but fortunately they were not needed. Protesters laid a floral wreath and handed out leaflets to racegoers yesterday. Five members of the Newcastle Animal Right Coalition picketed the entrance to the course for an hour and a half in a peaceful demonstration-

RACING RESULTS

straight and told the truth and

those are her ideals. I hope I'll

going to be the captain of a very

big ship and we won't be look-

ing to be just among the best in

Lambourn. We want to be among the best three stables in

the country."

Going: Good to Soft (Soft in places)

CHELTENHAM

Virtuge (11th).

14 ran. 2/s, 14, 4, 1, 1/s, 4, 17, 4, 2/s, 8, 20.

Winner brown gelding by Accordion out of Fourth Degree, ruined by P Nichols at Shopton Mellet for E Gutter & M Krysstoffack Hacing). Tota: \$230, \$340, \$440, \$230, DF: 28580. CSP: \$23265. Tricast: \$145640.

Scaling General Life, 4, 3, 2, sh-hd, 10, 12, sa, 4, 1½, nk, 1½, 4, 3, 2, sh-hd, 10, 13, 4, 8. (Winner chestmat gelding by Ceitic Cone out of Heeter Ann, trained by L. Lungo at Camuthanstown for R J Giberti, Tota: 2237; \$4.0, 2500, 2540, 5130, 0510, 2530, 51

SEDGEFIELD Going: Soft

Going: Soft

2.25: 1. DOCKMASTER (Richard Guerd) B-1;

2. Kalcashda 9-2; 3. D'Arbairy Street 9-2;

13 mr. 9, 20. (Mas Kas Millour), Michiehem), Table: 5860; 52:30, 52:30, 52:30, DF: 524:50. The 58:60; 52:30, 52:30, 52:30, DF: 524:50. The 59:60; 52:30, 52:30, 52:30, 52:30, DF: 524:50. The 59:60; 52:30,

1.48: 1. KUNG PRIAM (R Price) 10-1; 2. Mag-loal Shot 3-1 fav; 3. Tora 20-1. 1D ren. 11/s, sh-ht. (M Polgiase), Tota: EDLAC; 52-40, 1160, E310. DF; £38.30. CSF: £37.90. Tricest: £565.75.

ESTO. DF: 638-30. GSF: 637-96. Infrast: FSESTS.
2.15: 1. NANY'S AFFAIR (G Duffield) 11-8;
2. Carrie Pootier Evens fav; 3. Abitael 44-1.
8 ran. 1/4, 1/4. (Sr Merk Prescott) Totae £170;
£100, £200 DF: £100 CSF: £200
£100, £200 DF: £100 CSF: £200
£100, £204 DF: £200 CSF: £200
£101, £104 ESTO, £100 CSF: £200
£101, £104 ESTO, £100 CSF: £200
£101, £104 ESTO, £100 CSF: £200 DF:
£2400 CSF: £227, NP: Moresco Gold.
£25: 1. SHARP SCOTCH (R Eccretrick) 4-1;
2. Mutahachath 8-1; 3. Without Friends 9-1.
8 ran. 7-4 (est Saguaro (eth), 1/4. 3. (D Carrio). Rote: £400, £200, £100 E160 DF: £1800
CSF: £2015, Theast: £1700, 11-2; 2. Mr

4.05: 1. SWIFT (K Fallon) 11-2; 2, Mr Fortywhite 20-1; 3. Noulani 10-17 ran. 13-5 fav Green Bopper (4th), 1, 7, (M Polglase). Totae 57:07; 52:70, 55:40, DF: \$22:40, CSF: \$29:93. 18993.
4.40: 1. DANKA (M Fenton) 18-1; 2. State Approved 1-8 fev; 3. Goldstar 33-1.5 rim. 3. 1. (K Comerford) Totes 25:50; 13:50 21:0. DF: \$430.05F: 28:04. NF: Moorrasites 5.15: 1. NIFTY NORMANI (Alex Greeves) 2-1 fev; 2. Poter Misst 18-1; 3. Semmer 14-1, 15 rac. ½, 1½. (D Nichols), Totes 22:70: 21:00. 28:40. 22:80. DF: \$58.0. CSF: \$3698. Theset: \$370.57. NF: Bold Frontist Placepot: \$2520. Guadoot: \$28:80. Placepot: \$2520. Guadoot: \$28:80. Placepot: \$2520. Semmer 5.50.

Spring in Society's step

FOR THE tens of thousands of By GREG WOOD Irish punters who have turned Cheltenham and its surroundings into County Gloucestershire, even Istabraq's victory that makes the effort seem yesterday was merely a rehearsal. Today - St Patrick's Day, by a happy co-incidence, ed, for if the race were a handis when the serious business begins, as Alexander Banquet including the main fancies, and above all. Nick Dundee would be rated within a few carry fortunes into battle for the visitors. Ireland is booming just now, but defeat for both of today's great hopes might just be the difference between suctip the economy into reces-

Such is the hurden of hope attached to Nick Dundee in who is by some way the outparticular that the Queen Mother Champion Chase, in theory the feature event of the second day almost feels like one of the supporting events. Yet it Call Equiname quickened well

best chance of the afternoon to worthwhile

And effort is certainly needicap, several of the runners, pounds of each other. Not many though, have the scope for improvement which will probably cess and failure. The ones who do are Call Equiname, Edredon sider of the three.

All that seems to prove, howbookies have short memories. arguably offers punters their to win the Victor Chandler Arkle and Champion Chase in cleverer at his fences, and he

same as a champiouship race in the spring. At around 8-1, it cruise and jump." find a winner at the sort of price at the Festival. Edredon Bleu, meanwhile, may find that the ground conditions are not quite in his favour. Neither deserves to start at such a skinny price.

> RICHARD EDMONDSON Nap: Easter Ross (Cheltenham 3.15) NB: Dr Bones (Cheltenham 5.05)

Hill Society (2.35) is no cera liking for Cheltenham. He was the Arkie Trophy last year, and

is a chance worth taking.

The favourites for the Champion Chase are easy to oppose, but it is much harder to find a reason to doubt Nick Dundee (3.55). The drying ground is a slight worry, but Eddie O'Grady, his trainer, feels that 'he will get away with good ground", and in every other respect, he looks a champion in the making.

"He's the best novice chas-Bleu and possibly Hill Society, tainty, but he does at least have extraordinary reputation contouched off in the final stride of bumper and a point-to-point. He Novices' Hurdle yesterday. was like a crossword puzzle ever, is that hoth punters and ran well at the meeting in 1997 with a lot of blanks, but gradutoo. Like another Irish horse, ally we're filling in the odd one Klairon Davis, who won the here and there. He's getting

Chase in Jamuary, but a hand- successive years, he may save has a wonderful cruising speed. the season when second in a icap under 11st 3lb is not the his best form for Cheltenham That's his strength, he can handicap at Ascot last month.

> enough to get Nick Dundee while Sounds Like Fun (5.05) home, but life will be more dif-will surely go close in the Mildficult for the other Irish banker, Alexander Banquet. At least three of his British rivals, Barconsidering from a punting ton, Behrajan and Rash Repoint of view is the Bumper. mark, could be good enough to which will be one of the most beat him, and while Barton has run up an impressive seer I've ever had." O'Grady says. 200), whose only defeat in four Alexander Prize, who will at-"He arrived at my yard with an outings this season came at the hands of Hors La Loi III, who

> > Polar Prospect (next best 3.15) has had plenty of racing this season, hat he seems to thrive on hard work, and put up one of his best performances of

He is a very live outsider at It should be more than around 25-1 for the Coral Cup,

may of Flete. The only other race worth popular contests of the entire meeting with the Irish backers. quence in the north, the value As ever, the visiting challenge het must be BEHRAJAN (nap will be strong, and includes tempt to give Willie Mullins his fourth successive win in the sidering he had only won a trotted away with the Supreme race. Billverdin too will take some stopping, but for one the race may stay at home. Martin Pipe believes that Golden Alpha (5.40) is best bumper horse he has trained, and he is a very hard man to argue with

2.35 QUEEN MOTHER CHAMPION CHASE (Grade 1) (A) 2170,000 added 2m 298,600

Owner, if the territorial trainer. The Force Westerned fires cuit whim 16% lengths fourth to Celoses in Game Sport Chase at Navioury Can 15 good to sorth. Previously vestioned two out when 18 lengths shich to One Man in Casen Noterial Champion Chase at Chelerham 2nh, good, Sussempt: Top class two-mile chastr but length whiting the Tangle Creak and the Game Shift Chases but most disappointing on his responsance and 6 withouts to be seen if he can recepture his best form.

Going 4* Distance 4* Jumping 4* Railing 140

Contact Poster Research Control of the March Poster Research Contact Research Resear

he must hold every chance.

Going of Distance of Jumping of Rading 140



9 21042 KADASTROF (19) (D) 9yo 12st Owner; A Paton Trainer; R Dictor Owner, A Paton Thallesc R Dictor
Form: Every cleans lest and min well when short-head second to Super Tectics in
Emblem Cleans at Kampton (2m, soft), Previously outpaced from eighth when 12 lengths
fourth to Jeffell in Red Aum Limited Handicep Chase at Antree (2m, soft).
Externacy: Limit in two lests season and ran a promising race on his beliesd seatowns doze. May be audictly a longer detance, however, and needs toemprove markedby on all troom to hald even an each-way chance.

Going ** Mintence ** Jumping ** Refing 127

10 2-654P LORD DORCET (28) (D) syo 12st.

Denote: J Hogg Timbrer: J Charlton
Porce Raised up two out in Camair Crusedor Handison Chrese at Newcastie (2m 45, good to set)). Previously vesterand four out when 33% lengths fourth to Madigard, (7b better foolsy) in Nervicon House Handison Chrese at Dorcester (2m 10)yds, good, (7b better foolsy) in Nervicon House Handison Chrese at Dorcester (2m 10)yds, good, (7b better foolsy) in Nervicon House Handison (2m act but has shown fittle form this section and feeld to complete the course lest knew Wood have an exclusive years on his best form the charges of him receptaints it look stim, Goling of Obstance of Jungsleg of Raising 135

to improve a great to our and to be past.

Going of Distance of Jumping X Reting 125

From Federating Local sero purpose up priest sets in Centre Spirit Crass is restourned (2m til good to putil, Principular) reluction to race and tailed off in Pater March Limit-ad Handidap Crass at Heydock (2m, solf).

Sampayor, Francely Local priess who won the Arkie Challenge Trophy (Novice) Chase two sessors ago that has become most moodly and unco-operative and land refused to race on his less two cudings. Must be lessed with extreme coulon.

Gallog & Distance & Jumping ? Ripfing 132

Going / Distance / Jumping / Rating 125



: - 13 declared BETTING: 3-1 Cell Equiname, 100-00 Edredon Brea, 9-2 Direct House, 7-1 Hit Society, 9-1
Ark Ton, 10-1 Cellbuds, 19-1 Kadestrot, 20-1 Multigen, Pepillon, 33-1 Or Royat, 50-1 Cueb
briar Challenge, Green Green Desert, Lord Darcet
1986: One Man 10 12 0 8 Harding 7-2 (G Richards) 8 run

PROFESSIONAL PUNTER

SIMON 'DODGER' McCARTNEY

Designed and compiled by lan Davis

Mother Champi

on Chase. He has

not been running

hadly this season

but I expect him to

leave this term's

form well behind

this afternoon and

he should be

O'Brien the all-conquering hero

IT TAKES a proper crack to bagfull of bookmakers cash and open up the absurdly serious young face of Aidan O'Brien. In victory or defeat, he always manages to look like a man who's just mislaid his wallet. Standing self-consciously on the victory rostrum, with JP McManus and Charlie Swan, O'Brien broke into a rare smile to acknowledge a chorus of Irish voices which hroke through the mayhem of the winners' enclosure.

Commemoration in song is the ultimate accolade for any Irish champion and, in just under four minutes of hlistering action, Istabraq had more than earned his tribute. "We've had Monksfield.

Night Nurse and Dawn Run Danoli and Derrymoyle. But they'd find it hard to beat this one Istabrao from Ballydovie." Words by Maurice Curran and Garry Lyons of Dublin, to

a few beers on a recent flight back from San Francisco Istabraq from Ballydoyle. There was never much danger of the words being wasted at Cheltenham yesterday. "Billy Bunter could ride this one, Charlie Swan had told Maurice Curran at Leopardstown recently. They had won a hatful on him last year at 3-1 and piled into the odds on offer yesterday until the bookmakers realised the error of their ways and sent him off the shortest price favourite for the Champion Hurdle for 45 years. "Cause he

won't be passed when he's jumped the last, Istabraq from Ballydoyle." But there was more to the tumultuous welcome Istabraq received than could be recorded in rhyming couplets. Dawn Run. and Jonio O'Neill raised the roof when he completed the double

be sung to a traditional Irish air. of Champion Hurdle and Gold

Another pulsating Champion Hurdle victory thrusts an equine idol from Ballydoyle into the realm of legend and song. **Andrew Longmore** reports

his way into the fretwork of him in the usually raucous Cheltenham history and Dano- fashion. Yesterday, the bid was li, though just short of the top class, and his country trainer, Tom Foley, became the unwitting symbol of Ireland's equestrian genius. But Istabraq is different. His pedigree is aristocratic, his owner one of the richest men in Ireland and his trainer plies his trade from a purpose-built equine palace. His claims to democracy stem from the pocket and there can of the betting slips in their be no hroader constituency.

more noble than another snatch and grab raid on the bookies' satcheis. "Ready to join the greats," the morning headline read. As the familiar green and gold colours moved nonchalantly onto the heels of the early leaders, every powerhouse stride propelled Istabraq further into exalted realms and the crowd, mindless pockets, responded to the A year ago, Istabraq was thrilling sight of a champion's running for the health of the Ex-

known long before and a green scarf was hurled high into the blue Cheltenham sky. In truth, the real danger

came not from the other 12 horses in a field reduced to trotters long before the final burst up the hill, but the weight of the history books and the threat of a ricked neck for Swan, who twice before the final flight flicked a disdainful look at the stragglers behind. There had been brave talk of revenge from French Holly's connections, reduced to nothing more than paper talk once Swan had

set sail for home two flights out. The statistics will tell you that Istabraq is the first successful defending champion since See You Then, who won three in a row in the 1980s, hut the more disconcerting truth for prospective English challengers is that the seven-yearold's best might still be to come. chequer and those whose for- plicity. Swan raised an index fin- In that whispering way of his,

opposition and the bookmakers knew it. The weighing-room had given up long ago. In the post-race interview, McManus, Swan and O'Brien mumbled sweet nothings into the microphone, though inner emotions must have run high.

about it for a while. His one worry - and his fresh face does

not betray many sleepless

nights - was that Istabraq's

gathering speed might some-

how impede his stamina. It

was the slenderest of threads on which to hang any coherent

David Ashdown

"I must pay tribute to Aidan and everyone else back at Ballydoyle about how well Istabraq always looks. Whenever I see him, at home or on the gallops, he never has a hair out of place," McManus said in a rare burst of eloquence. They have no real need to sing Istabraq's praises. Others have taken care of that. "For he's our hero from old Ireland, Istabraq from Bal-

Flagship flies high

was also victory for another icans Michael and Elizabeth Krysztofiak, took the Arkle Troren run at the Festival. It was a first professional win at the meeting for Joe Tizzard.

THE FLAG that was fluttering boldest yesterday may have been the Irish tricolor, but there pennant Flagship Uberalles, in the stars and stripes of Amerphy, ending Paul Nicholla's bar-

Success has come more consistently for Martin Pipe and Tony McCoy. The former is now level with Vincent O'Brien on 23 Festival winners following the win for Hors La Loi III in the opener. Only Tom Dreaper on 26 stands ahead of him. For McCoy it was a fourth consecutive Festival win, Hors La Loi III was priced at 7-1 by Ladbrokes for next year's Champion Hurdle,

The crowd of 46,470 was a record for the opening day.

Celtic Glant was a 20-1 winner for Hyperion in -yesterday's Kim Muir -Chese at Cheltenham

Inspiration courtesy of a swag Cup, little Monksfield galloped ger to denote what most had O'Brien had been warning us tunes had been made greeted Lord of the River set to deliver

IN JUNE 1996 an unbroken four-year-old gelding by Lord Americo entered the sale ring at Fairyhouse. His destiny was going to be decided in the next

He was an attractive horse with correct conformation and a reasonable pedigree. He walked quietly around the stage of this circular theatre oblivious to the importance of the poise from the rostrum. After a sustained battle between Irish trainer Arthur Moore and agent Keith Lewis the hammer fell at 80,000 guineas. He left the ring as the most expensive store horse to be sold in the British



Jamie Osborne, who has joined the Independent's writing team at Cheltenham, looks ahead to the races in which he hopes to ride today. Oshorne was taken to hospital yesterday for x-rays on his right hand after his mount, Kadou Nonantais, fell in the William Hill National Hunt Chase. He was having physiotherapy last night and the course doctor will decide this morning whether he can ride today

Isles that year. Quite a burden on such young shoulders. The horse had never been ridden. let alone galloped. He had never jumped, nobody knew the size of his engine nor the villingness of his brain.

Sales poppers rarely prove to be the best racehorses. Take Sheikh Mohammed's 10.2m dollar yearling purchase be named Snafi Dancer. The horse didn't possess sufficient ability to see a racecourse so he was retired to stud only to be found to be infertile. This poor gelding didn't even have that option. However, Brian Stewart-Brown signed the cheque, sent the horse to Oliver Sherwood and named him Lord Of The River.

Today, the same horse faces the biggest test of his fledgling career. He has proved this season to be worth every penny of his lofty price-tag having won the Feltham and Reynoldstown Chases. He possesses a big engine and an amazing will to win. His jumping, which was slightly awkward in his first few chases, has improved rapidly in

confidence has grown and his form has become stronger. peak and I am confident that he can dent Nick Dundee's high reputation and put himself in line for the Millennium Gold

the past couple of months. His

Today you will see him at a

Six years ago.

vant to his fearless owner. Second in this race two years ago he ran badly last year after suffering a training setback. Another injury has restricted him to just one race this season when he was well beaten by Celibate at Newbury. Today he will strip much fitter and cannot be left out of calculations in

owns Ask Tom my ride in the Queen Mother Champion Chase. This horse was bought privately after finishing second to Suny Bay in a four-yearold point to point in Waterford

He has proved a great serwhat looks a very open race. After a slow start to the seahit a rich vein of form. He provides me with two rides today and both have a chance of win Frosty Canyon, my ride in

the Bumper, has the unusual distinction of being the son of a previous Cheltenham winner His dam, Rose Ravine was a Fulke Walwyn-trained ultratough winner of the Stayers' Hurdle. Her son has inherited her staying power and in e race where stamina is a must this horse holds a great each way chance. Hoh Express cannot claim

the same family links to the Festival. Himself a winner of a Listed race on the Flat in Germany, his dam won three races as a two-year-old. His breeder certainly did not have the Cheltenham Festival in mind when planning the mating but despite that he has taken well to fences and could be a handicap snip in the Mildmay of Flete Handicap

Jamie Osborne is carrying the logo of The Independent on his breeches and color throughout Brian Stewart-Brown also son Paul Webber's horses have the Cheitenhom Festival

CHARLIE BROOKS, the former trainer.

has told me that BARTON is the est horse he ever had and I know Simon Sherwood of hevoi even follow have kept him when he took over Brooks's vard.

Barton is with Tim Easterby now and has been so impressive this season, particularly at Doncaster, that I think he should win the opening Royal & SunAlliance Novices' Hurdle.

My friends in Ireland tell me that HILL SOCIETY has heen laid out for the Queen

good value bet. Finally, my Irish contacts tell me that NICK DUNDEE is a worldbeater and cannot be opposed in the Royal & SunAlliance (Novices') Chase. He could have run in the

Gold Cup tomorrow but sen-

sibly his connections have

decided to take this easier op-

CHELTENHAM WEATHER Today: Any overnight fog will clear Tomorrow: A fresher day, with the quickly, to be followed by a dry and temperature unlikely to rise above 12 surmy day. It should be the warmest degrees. After a cloudy start there day of the year so far, with the temshould be some sunny spells, alperature rising to 16 or 17 degrees. though there is a chance of rain later it will be more humid than of lete.

	1969	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
Fate of the favourites:	1	1	2	1	_3_	F.	1	3	5 .	6
Wirmer's place in betting	: 1	1	0	1	3_		1	0	9	3
Starting-prices:	7-4	11-10	9-1	۵v	11-1	4-1	5-2	9-1	9-1	7-2
Wirmers' ages:	8	9	8	8	8	7	8	7	10	10
Profit or loss to £1 state	e; Pat	ourte	es +5	0.35	Seco	and R	Nour	tes -	210.00	

ongest-oriced winner: Deep Sensation (1983) 11-1 Top trainers: O Elsworth - Barmbrook Again (1989 & 1990) D Nicholson - Viking Flagship (1994 & 1995) cop jockey. No jockey has won this race more than once in the past 10 years